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Human resources management

Improvement of equitable geographical representation in the United Nations Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to the request of the General Assembly contained in section II, paragraph 29, of its resolution 57/305 on human resources management and paragraph 51 of resolution 58/270 on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. The report provides information on the progress made in improving equitable geographical representation of Member States for the period from June 1994 to June 2004, as well as specific measures implemented or planned to further improve representation.

* A/59/150.

** The four-day delay in the submission of the present report was due to the need for late consultations and editing within the Secretariat.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report on improvement of equitable geographical representation of Member States in the staff of the Secretariat appointed to posts subject to geographical distribution in the system of desirable ranges is submitted pursuant to the request made by the General Assembly in section II, paragraph 29, of its resolution 57/305 of 15 April 2003. The system of desirable ranges is described in the Secretary-General's report of 9 December 2003 on the composition of the Secretariat (A/58/666, para. 12). The present report analyses the recruitment of nationals of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States from 1994 to 2004 and highlights the measures taken by the Secretariat in its continuing efforts to improve geographical representation. Pursuant to paragraph 51 of Assembly resolution 58/270 of 23 December 2003, the report also recommends measures for developing a more robust capability within the Office of Human Resources Management of the Secretariat to enable it to reduce the level of underrepresentation of Member States and the number of unrepresented Member States.

II. Recruitment of nationals from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States

2. The recruitment of staff to posts subject to geographical distribution is governed by the system of desirable ranges. For that purpose, Member States are grouped into four categories: unrepresented, underrepresented, within range and overrepresented. A Member State is considered "unrepresented" when not a single one of its nationals is serving in a post subject to geographical distribution having gone through the established selection process. It is "underrepresented" when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts is below the lower limit of the desirable range. It is "within range" when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts is between the upper and lower limits of the desirable range; and it is "overrepresented" when the number of its nationals appointed to such posts exceeds the upper limit of the desirable range. The representation status of Member States is affected by many factors, notably turnover of staff, changes in the scale of assessments and changes in the total number of Member States.

3. Over the past 10 years there has been an improvement in the levels of "unrepresentation" and underrepresentation of Member States. Table 1 shows the total number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, as well as the total membership of the Organization annually for the period 1994-2004. The figures demonstrate a positive trend: the number of unrepresented Member States, 28 in 1994, declined to 15 in 2004, while the number of underrepresented Member States decreased from 25 in 1994 to 10 in 2004. However, of the 28 unrepresented Member States in June 1994, 5 continue to be unrepresented (Brunei Darussalam, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Sao Tome and Principe and Turkmenistan), and of the 25 underrepresented Member States in June 1994, 3 are currently underrepresented (Japan, Norway and Saudi Arabia).

Table 1
Number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, 1994-2004 (as at 30 June)

Member States	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Unrepresented	28	25	23	25	24	24	21	18	16	17	15
Underrepresented	25	25	22	20	9	13	8	10	11	10	10
Number of Member States	184	185	185	185	185	185	188	189	189	191	191

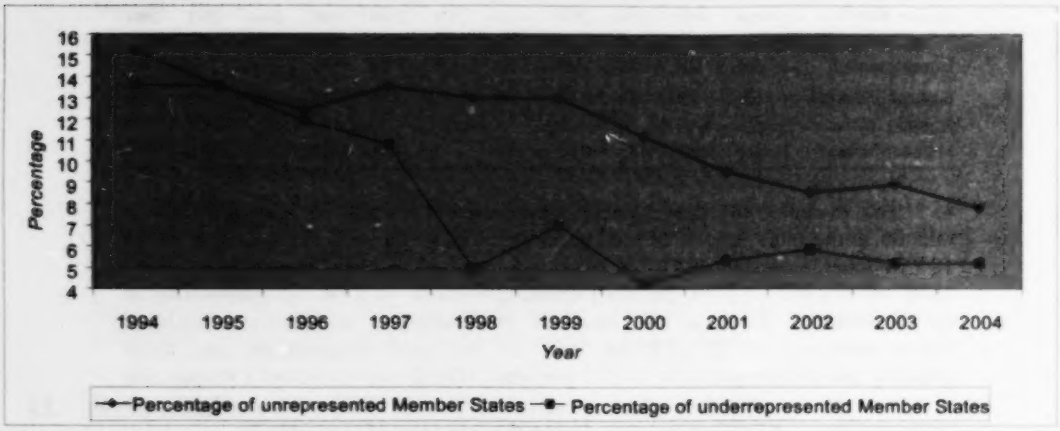
4. The evolution of geographical representation should be analysed also in relation to the total number of Member States in a given year. For example, of the 184 Member States in 1994, 28 (15.2 per cent of the total membership) were unrepresented and 25 (13.6 per cent) underrepresented. In 2004, the membership of the Organization stands at 191; however, the number of unrepresented Member States decreased to 15 (7.8 per cent of the total membership) and those underrepresented decreased to 10 (5.2 per cent). The decreases reflect a 48-per-cent improvement in unrepresentation between 1994 and 2004 and a 62-per-cent improvement in underrepresentation during the same period (see table 2).

Table 2
Unrepresented and underrepresented Member States as a percentage of the total number of Member States, 1994-2004 (as at 30 June 2004)

Member States	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*Improvement 1994-2004 (percentage)*
Unrepresented (as a percentage of the total)	15.2	13.5	12.4	13.5	13.0	13.0	11.2	9.5	8.5	8.9	7.8	48
Underrepresented (as a percentage of the total)	13.6	13.5	11.9	10.8	4.9	7.0	4.2	5.3	5.8	5.2	5.2	62
Total	**184**	**185**	**185**	**185**	**185**	**185**	**188**	**189**	**189**	**191**	**191**	

5. Figure I illustrates the yearly fluctuation for the period 1994-2004. The year 1999 marked the beginning of an accelerated decrease in the level of unrepresentation. The level of underrepresentation appears to have reached a plateau, at 5.2 per cent, in 2003 and 2004.

Figure I
Unrepresented and underrepresented Member States as a percentage of the total number of Member States, 1994-2004 (as at 30 June 2004)



III. Measures to improve equitable geographical representation

6. The Secretary-General places great importance on the mandate of the General Assembly to ensure equitable geographical representation among the staff of the Secretariat and has implemented a number of measures, including those set out below.

A. Recruitment of candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States

7. Table 3 shows the number and the percentage of recruitments from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States over the past 10 years to posts subject to geographical distribution. On average, 22 per cent, or more than one out of five recruitments, has been from an unrepresented or underrepresented Member State. The appointment percentage fluctuated between a high of 33.3 per cent and a low of 10 per cent.

Table 3
Recruitments for posts subject to geographical distribution from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States[a]

Appointments	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Geographical appointments	124	135	129	93	104	123	141	159	165	168	208
Geographical appointments from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States	22	45	25	16	25	20	41	43	24	36	21
Appointments from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States (as a percentage of all geographical appointments)	17.7	33.3	19.4	17.2	24.0	16.3	29.1	27.0	14.5	21.4	10.0

[a] Appointments over a 12-month period, 1 July to 30 June, from 1994 to 2004.

B. Recruitment through national competitive examinations

8. The national competitive examination is an important mechanism promoting the recruitment of qualified young candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States. Over the past 10 years, a total of 534 successful national competitive examination candidates have been recruited, 141 of whom were from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States. Of the 28 Member States that were unrepresented in 1994, 19 became represented as a result of recruitment of successful national competitive examination candidates from those countries. Table 4 shows the number of Member States participating in the national competitive examination from 1994 to 2004 and the number of candidates convoked (i.e. invited to sit the examination).

Table 4
Number of Member States participating in the national competitive examination and total number of candidates convoked

	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Number of Member States participating in the national competitive examination	24	30	34	14	18	24	19	34	31	46	62
Number of unrepresented and underrepresented Member States participating in the national competitive examination	8	9	9	8	10	12	15	22	23	14	18
Total number of candidates convoked	698	641	801	823	1 342	2 310	1 180	2 886	2 479	3 911	4 012

9. A significant increase is observable in both the number of Member States participating in the national competitive examination and in the number of candidates convoked to sit the examination.

10. The increase in the number of Member States reflects the participation of a large number of those which are below the mid-point and in danger of becoming underrepresented as a result of projected retirements and other separations. The Office of Human Resources Management provides support to Member States in preparing for the conduct of the examinations in their countries, including organizing briefings on how to arrange publicity for the examination, provision of information material and links to the web site of the Office.

C. Human resources action plans

11. In 1999, as part of human resources management reform, the Office of Human Resources Management introduced the human resources action plan to assist the departments and offices of the Secretariat in setting goals and assessing results in a number of areas, including the improvement of equitable geographical representation. Human resources targets are set and signed every two years between the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and heads of department.

12. Twice a year, the Office meets with departments and offices to assess the progress that has been made towards the agreed targets. To allow more proactive self-monitoring, the Office will provide, by the end of 2004, online information and monthly progress reports. Since the end of the 2001-2002 human resources planning cycle, the Office has provided an analysis and a performance scorecard that shows the extent to which the departments have achieved the targets stated in the action plans.

13. As far as the filling of vacant posts subject to geographical distribution is concerned, the target in the action plan for each department is to recruit at least one candidate from an unrepresented or underrepresented Member State, taking into account article 101.3 of the Charter of the United Nations. During the second planning cycle (2001-2002), 18 departments improved their results compared with the previous cycle (1999-2000); 20 departments recruited at least one candidate from underrepresented Member States; and two of those departments also recruited one candidate from an unrepresented Member State. During the first year of the third cycle (2003-2004), 16 departments have recruited candidates from underrepresented Member States and two departments have recruited national competitive examination candidates from unrepresented Member States.

14. The data provided in tables 1 and 2 indicate that human resources action plans have contributed to the improvement in geographical representation of Member States.

D. Staff selection system

15. As part of the Secretary-General's reform programme for human resources management, a new staff selection system was introduced in May 2002. Under that system, when making the selection decision, heads of department and office are

required to certify that they have taken into account the Organization's human resources objectives and targets as reflected in the departmental human resources action plans, especially with regard to geography and gender. No case will be considered by the central review bodies unless such a written certification has been entered in the electronic support tool of the system, Galaxy electronic staffing (e-staffing), a feature that serves as a reminder to heads of department that they are accountable for the improvement of the geographical representation of staff in their departments and/or offices.

16. In order to assist further departments in improving geographical representation throughout the Organization, the Galaxy e-staffing system has been enhanced to include a special feature that highlights candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States. The system also offers a search function to help managers identify candidates by nationality.

E. Partnership with Member States

17. In order to recruit more staff from Member States that are unrepresented or underrepresented, partnership between the Office of Human Resources Management and the Member States is essential. The Office holds periodic meetings with representatives from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, with the most recent meeting held in April 2004. The objective of the meetings is to inform the concerned Member States of the measures taken to recruit their nationals, to learn about their concerns and to identify areas where the Office can collaborate with the Member States to improve their representation. The Office will host such meetings at least once every year.

18. In addition, special briefings are held on request for representatives of the permanent missions for unrepresented and underrepresented Member States to share information on their representation.

19. Recognizing that special efforts must be made for Member States with no representation or a very low representation level, recruitment missions have been organized to address the issue. For example, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and other senior officials of the Office of Human Resources Management conducted recruitment missions to Japan in 2000, 2001 and 2002. Recruitment campaigns were launched before the missions, candidates were interviewed and a list of candidates was compiled and presented to heads of departments and offices for consideration. A number of candidates were subsequently recruited, after going through the regular recruitment procedures for advertised vacancies.

IV. Proposed additional measures

20. In paragraph 51 of its resolution 58/270, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-ninth session on proposals for developing a more robust capability within the Office of Human Resources Management of the Secretariat to enable it to reduce the level of underrepresentation of Member States and the number of unrepresented Member States. Pursuant to that resolution, a number of additional measures are proposed below.

A. "Fast-track" recruitment procedure

21. The Secretariat is proposing to introduce a "fast-track" recruitment procedure for candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States to posts at the P-4 level and above in line with the overall principles and procedures of the staff selection system.

22. Based on analysis of staffing projections, the Office of Human Resources Management plans to initiate targeted recruitment campaigns in partnership with departments and concerned Member States with a view to identifying potential candidates from Member States that are unrepresented or underrepresented for positions at the P-4 level and above. In accordance with established procedures, the Office will forward the names of potential candidates to programme managers for their review and interview against pre-approved generic job profiles. After review by the central review bodies, endorsed candidates will be placed on a special roster, which will be made available to programme managers who have vacancies at the P-4 level and above in the relevant occupational group. External candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States who have applied for specific vacancy announcements and who have been endorsed by the central review bodies will be placed on this special roster as well. If a suitable candidate is found from the roster, such a candidate would be recruited without the issuance of a vacancy announcement. Should no suitable candidate be found from the special roster, the post would be advertised in accordance with established procedures.

B. National focal points

23. In order to facilitate collaboration between the Office of Human Resources Management and unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, the Office proposes that relevant permanent missions identify focal points with whom the Secretariat would work on various aspects of increasing their representation, including the organization of national competitive examinations and identification of qualified candidates.

C. Office of Human Resources Management focal point

24. The task of improving geographical representation requires the systematic development and implementation of strategies to pursue the recruitment of candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States. A focal point is being established for this purpose at the P-5 level in the Office of Human Resources Management. The incumbent will work closely with departments, candidates and Member States and, in collaboration with the national focal points, organize recruitment missions to identify qualified candidates from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, as necessary. The incumbent will also coordinate the "fast-track" recruitment procedure.

V. Conclusion and recommendation

25. **Achieving equitable geographical representation of Member States in posts subject to geographical distribution in the Secretariat is a complex and**

challenging task. It requires long-term commitment and concerted efforts on the part of the Secretariat, as well as the Member States concerned. The Secretary-General invites the General Assembly to take note of the measures already implemented by the Secretariat to improve geographical representation and to endorse his recommendation on the "fast-track" recruitment procedure and the establishment of national focal points.

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Information and Communications Technology Strategy

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In line with General Assembly resolution 58/270 of 23 December 2003, paragraph 46, the present report provides information on the progress in implementing the information and communications technology strategy and on the impact of investments in information and communications technology on the business processes of the Organization.

* A/59/150.

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I. Introduction

1. It will be recalled that the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session his report entitled "Information and communication technology strategy" (A/57/620). The report outlined the approach adopted in targeting investments in information and communication technologies (ICT). The report further elaborated on the fact that the investments would be focused on delivering tangible returns in three areas, considered to be representative of core activities of the Organization: (a) the sharing and dissemination of the Organization's institutional knowledge capital, (b) administrative and management processes and (c) the servicing of the United Nations organs and governing bodies. In order to deliver value-added services in these three areas, four elements were identified as "building blocks": (a) a robust infrastructure at Headquarters and at offices away from Headquarters, (b) security policies and provisions to ensure business continuity, (c) reliable connectivity with the field and (d) the building and efficient utilization of a skilled human resources base with focused skills in key technologies and management practices.

2. In its resolution 57/304 of 15 April 2003, the General Assembly had taken note of the report contained in document A/57/620 and requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to provide further information and to make proposals on the further strengthening of governance and central leadership arrangements, including a mechanism to assess the results achieved and apply the lessons learned, to be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. The report on the implementation of Assembly resolution 57/304 (A/58/377) was submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. Upon review of that report, the Assembly, in its resolution 58/272 (I) of 23 December 2003, had, inter alia, welcomed the steps being taken to address requests contained in resolution 57/304, and reiterated the need to indicate the return on investment for planned and proposed major projects in terms that were as quantitative as possible. Furthermore, in its resolution 58/270 of 23 December 2003, paragraph 46, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the impact of investments in information and communications technology.

3. The present report addresses the above requests of the General Assembly. It summarizes an outcome of the work done during the current year on implementation of initiatives related to the building blocks and on the strengthening of the governance aspects of the information and communications technology strategy. It also provides information on the impact of the ICT networks on the operations of the United Nations.

II. Infrastructure

4. The financial constraints prevailing during the biennium 2002-2003 owing to the budgetary reductions imposed by General Assembly resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001 resulted in the postponement to the present biennium of several critical initiatives required to maintain and enhance the computing and communications infrastructure required for increased usage of ICT services. During the current year, the Secretariat has been significantly upgrading its enterprise server and storage area network infrastructures to enable adequate and reliable

performance in order to achieve the service availability goals of 95 per cent, set as an expected accomplishment in the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. This included implementation of the major activities detailed in paragraphs 5-11 below.

5. **Upgrade of the local area network (LAN) at United Nations Headquarters.** This project augments the data transmission capacity to each desktop computer from 10 megabits per second (MBPS) to 100 MBPS, thereby adding performance and reliability to the functioning of the network. As a result of that capacity upgrade, new multimedia applications, such as desktop videoconferencing, will be possible for use by client offices. The availability of desktop videoconferencing has the potential to greatly facilitate real-time information exchange at much lower cost, as compared with the traditional videoconferencing sessions. From a functionality perspective, the fact that desktop videoconferencing allows users to share documents, files and audio-visual materials stored in their computers during videoconference sessions, will make business processes simpler and faster.

6. Several organization units of the Secretariat have already requested this facility as a means of streamlining their work flow and augmenting efficiency. As an example, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management will use this facility for interaction with author offices in the preparation of official documents. The Programme Planning and Budget Division will utilize the desktop videoconferencing as a collaboration tool with which to interact with budget units at offices away from Headquarters, in particular during the budget formulation process.

7. As of July 2004, the LAN capacity has been upgraded on 10 floors of the Secretariat building. The project's completion is foreseen by the first quarter of the year 2005.

8. **Installation of WiFi public hotspots.** This project involves the installation of a campus-wide wireless visitor network. It is intended to support delegations, staff, non-governmental organizations and other partners and vendors. Through WiFi, users of laptop computers and other portable devices can connect to the Internet from any place within the area of coverage. Of particular importance to the United Nations delegations is the capability to access the Official Document System of the United Nations and any other repositories of information directly at those times when they are participating in official meetings.

9. As of July 2004, WiFi has been operational in the following areas: Office of the President of the General Assembly, Conference Rooms 5, 6 and 7, General Assembly Building, second floor (Indonesian Lounge), Office of the President of the Security Council, Security Council Consultation Room, Security Council Waiting Room, Security Council Lounge, Delegates' Lounge, Conference Building basement corridor, South Annex Building SAB-32 (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management Interpreters Lounge), First Basement neck area, Viennese Café, Secretariat Building lobby, Secretariat Building, third floor (Press bullpen area), and the FF Building. Installation of WiFi is currently in progress in the General Assembly Hall, the Security Council Chamber, the Trusteeship Council Chamber, the Economic and Social Council Chamber, and Conference Rooms 1, 2, 3 and 4.

10. **Free access to Official Document System of the United Nations (ODS).** The infrastructure to support the implementation of public access to ODS has been purchased and installed. Servers, storage devices, load balancing equipment and software required to ensure adequate performance of the system, once ODS is made available to the general public, are currently being tested. Detailed information on the progress made on this project and its operational advantages will be provided to the General Assembly in a special report in response to the Assembly's request as contained in paragraph 56 of its resolution 58/270. That report will be annexed to the first budget performance report for the biennium 2004-2005.

11. **Joint Operations of the Communications and Information Technology Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Information Technology Services Division of the Office of Central Support Services.** The operations of the Communications and Information Technology Service and the Information Technology Services Division are being consolidated to ensure a unified and coordinated approach towards installing technological infrastructure and delivering support services for the Organization as a whole. The joint operations will leverage the investments made in infrastructure and will enable a reduction in overall support costs. In the context of these collaborative arrangements, effective 1 January 2004, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has begun providing telecommunication services to the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 and over satellite links to Brindisi. As a result, costs of voice services have been significantly reduced by utilizing service contracts established with local carriers at very favourable rates. Internet services are being provided either through local Internet service providers or through Headquarters, taking advantage of the time difference. At a time when local usage in New York is low, the above offices are able to utilize the available capacity. Also, using the "follow-the-sun approach", support staff in Brindisi can monitor server operations in New York and vice versa, thus improving the reliability of the services.

III. Security

12. Operationally, the Organization has been coping well with the significant challenges to the security of its network that it is constantly facing. Hacking, "denial of service", viruses, spam (unsolicited mail) and "spyware" (software that spies on users' computer activity) are ever-growing menaces to the safe and reliable operation of the ICT network. For example, at Headquarters, almost 99 per cent of received e-mail is either spam or virus-related, and only 1 per cent of the received e-mail is legitimate. A number of anti-spam and anti-virus measures are being implemented in a constant battle to safeguard the Organization's network. In July 2004 alone, 33,276 potential virus infections were successfully contained, most notably the "Mydoom.O", which impacted even the largest Internet search engines like Google and Yahoo. Similarly, the anti-spyware actions in July 2004 eliminated 19,920 spyware pests. On average, about 500 attempts to hack the Secretariat

servers are foiled every month. The security measures implemented in the Secretariat, including the multilayered intrusion detection and prevention mechanisms, are consistent with those in use by Fortune 500 companies, banks and government institutions.

13. The above has become possible due to significant progress made in the implementation of the security building block during the past year. In this context, the Secretariat made significant progress in the development of security regulations. A Secretary-General's bulletin on "Use of ICT resources and data" is expected to be promulgated in the third quarter of 2004. A draft bulletin on ICT security, business continuity and emergency preparedness policy, which is under preparation, will be certified for compliance with the industry security standards in the first quarter of the year 2005, as a step required for its adoption and promulgation. These two issuances are the cornerstones in providing a robust policy framework. They will lay the foundation for ensuring the reliability of the ICT services within the Secretariat.

14. The Organization has formally adopted the industry standard performance benchmark for security known as ISO-17799. Secretariat-wide planning activities are well under way to bring all offices of the Secretariat into compliance with the standard and to obtain relevant certification. The ISO-17799 certification requires an established policy on communications security and well-documented procedures. Under the direction of the Information and Communications Technology Board and in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources Management, the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and offices away from Headquarters, an ICT manual, which will address those issues, is under preparation. The Manual will constitute a compendium of policies, standards, procedures and contain plans for promoting best practices for ICT management and service delivery, including security. The manual is expected to be completed and become the operational guide by the first quarter of the year 2005.

15. The Organization has also embarked on a concerted Secretariat-wide campaign to assess and subsequently mitigate security risks. By the end of the year 2004, the ICT security risk assessments will be completed at Headquarters and all offices away from Headquarters, representing an important milestone for managing a security programme. The risk assessment campaign demonstrates the global collaboration in place to collectively address risk management as an organization-wide business process for detecting, tracking and preventing security exposures. Since the inception of the risk assessment initiative, many exposures to risk have been mitigated.

16. In summary, a comprehensive programme of work dedicated to ICT security is well under way. Its results are based on measurable performance indicators which will be tested and verified by independent external expertise.

IV. Connectivity

17. The Communications and Information Technology Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Information Technology Services Division have jointly upgraded the connectivity to and from all the offices away from Headquarters that utilize satellite links. These cover the operations of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, ECA, ESCWA, the International Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious

Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991. In addition to the cost savings related to reduced voice-services rates mentioned above, this joint undertaking will also provide those offices with the capacity required for effective utilization of centrally deployed software applications such as the Electronic Performance Appraisal System (e-PAS) and iSeek (the new global Secretariat Intranet). Furthermore, it will allow for the facilitation of the process of consolidation and the integration of Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) operations in real time, the latter having the potential to effect significant cost savings.

V. Capacity-building

18. One of the most important accomplishments achieved during the last few months is the review process of initiatives for ICT development instituted by the Project Review Committee. The initiatives/proposals for ICT development are now standardized through preparation of the High-level Business Cases. The purpose of the High-level Business Cases is to make any significant ICT initiative business-sound and to facilitate the projection of return on investment by considering all costs, risks and benefits expected from the project. The uniform application of this methodology will allow the Secretariat to provide aggregate Organization-wide estimates on return on investments. It will also enhance the level of competence applied to the development and management of the ICT projects throughout the Secretariat. To support this process and assist departments and offices away from Headquarters in preparing their presentations to the Committee, the Information Technology Services Division has been conducting a series of seminars on the development of the High-level Business Cases. So far, about 300 staff members at Headquarters, the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Vienna and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia have already attended the seminars on that subject.

VI. Governance

19. By promulgating the Secretary-General's bulletin entitled "Information and Communications Technology Board" (ST/SGB/2003/17), the Secretary-General established a sound framework for institutionalizing governance of the ICT processes. The Project Review Committee, as a subsidiary body of the Information and Communications Technology Board, plays a crucial role in applying uniformly the standards established by the Board for application of ICT, reviews the ICT initiatives within the Organization and submits recommendations to the Board regarding whether those initiatives should be accepted and implemented. The jurisdiction of the Project Review Committee is Secretariat-wide, irrespective of the sources of the funding of such proposals. The Project Review Committee is chaired by the Director of the Information Technology Services Division and comprises representatives from departments at Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters.

20. For each ICT initiative, a High-level Business Case is prepared and reviewed and endorsed by the Project Review Committee prior to the commencement of the activity. The amount of information required for each Business Case is proportional

to the scope of the related ICT initiative and is set forth by guidelines in the ICT standard procedure. The Business Cases endorsed by the Committee will be used by the Secretariat as official documents for both internal management and support for Secretariat interaction with the governing bodies. From this perspective, it is foreseen that departments and offices will be expected to submit the approved Business Cases for the ICT initiatives in support of their budget proposals and that these will serve as a basis for determining the ICT requirements. An integral element in the Business Cases review process is the utilization of the capacity of the e-Assets system, a Secretariat-wide inventory of all ICT systems and initiatives. Prior to the undertaking of any ICT initiative, the e-Assets database will be checked to ascertain whether similar systems may already exist anywhere in the Secretariat, or whether similar initiatives have been launched elsewhere. This review process has already proved to be very effective in forestalling duplicate efforts, and consolidating and eliminating duplicative and overlapping ICT systems throughout the Secretariat.

VII. Inter-agency ICT activities

21. On behalf of the Organization and in coordination with the secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the Information Technology Services Division participated as lead agency in several ICT initiatives launched within the United Nations system. For example, the United Nations system Extranet provides a platform for enhanced information-sharing among the United Nations system organizations. It allows exchanges between organizations of information previously available only on Intranets and thus restricted. So far, most of the CEB member organizations have been connected to this dynamic information database. Work on further expansion and improved management of the content of the Extranet is under way. Extensive work has also been undertaken to establish an inter-agency search engine across the public web sites of all United Nations system organizations. The search engine, which will be based on the Google service, will provide a valuable tool for retrieving information from all web sites throughout the United Nations system, including working towards consistent processes that will help to enable system-wide management techniques. The search engine is expected to be in place shortly. Furthermore, in coordination with the ICT Task Force of CEB and the CEB secretariat, the Information Technology Services Division is collaborating with other organizations of the United Nations system in the development of a comprehensive ICT strategy for the United Nations system, in line with General Assembly resolution 57/295 of 20 December 2002. The progress in that area will be reported to the Assembly as appropriate.

VIII. Impact of investments in ICT

22. During the year 2004, efforts and resources have been devoted to further building the ICT infrastructure, implementing its security and upgrading its capacity, as part of the implementation of the ICT strategy. Although aggregate figures on the positive return of these investments cannot yet be produced, the methodology and mechanisms in place will allow the quantification of the return on investment at an individual project level.

23. Notwithstanding the absence of quantifiable returns, significant benefits can already be identified. Worth mentioning are, inter alia, the streamlining of processes as a result of introducing technology in the operations of the Headquarters Committee on Contracts. Another example is the universal adoption of e-PAS. E-PAS is a largely paper-less system that greatly facilitates the monitoring of compliance at several work-unit levels. It can now provide valuable tools for analysing performance at an aggregate level. Furthermore, the implementation of iSeek, the new global Secretariat Intranet, enables all users to easily access information in electronic format, thereby shortening the time previously required to perform several clerical and administrative functions.

24. The introduction of significant levels of automation in most processes that have, until now, been largely manual and labour-intensive has allowed the Secretariat to cope effectively with the increased workload emanating from the constantly increasing number of mandates adopted by the General Assembly and other Charter organs, and the increased number of meetings and of various operations, in particular in the peacekeeping area.

25. The updated status of implementation of the major ICT projects discussed in the report of the Secretary-General of 20 November 2002 (A/57/620), along with the estimated return on those investments at the project level, is reported in the annex to this report.

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

26. **The experience of the last few years has clearly demonstrated a high level of dependency of the Organization on the ICT infrastructures and services in its daily operations. ICT structures and services are now treated as essential utilities. Further progress has been made since the issuance of the previous report on the strengthening of the ICT operations and increasing their effectiveness through further standardization and unification of infrastructures and ICT processes. This work will continue in the context of the ICT strategy elaborated by the Secretary-General.**

27. **The General Assembly may wish to take note of this report.**

Annex

Updated status of implementation and expected benefits of major ICT projects

Resp[a]	*Project*	*Objective*	*Expected benefits*	*Progress — milestones*	*Type of return*
DESA	Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS)	In partnership with the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts and the Office of Internal Oversight Services, provide an integrated online environment for end-to-end execution of the programme management process.	Support to a United Nations management culture of accountability and administrative efficiency.	**Delivery of v.3.0 pilot August 2004; completion of pilot evaluation March 2005; completion of production system design July 2005.**	D
DESA	United Nations Commodity Trade Database (COMTRADE)	Migrate one of the largest United Nations databases from mainframe to client server environment with Internet access.	Subscribers will have direct access to the database and will be able to download data or research data using just a Web browser.	**Currently more than 750 million commodity trade transactions are available for viewing and downloading. Subscriber access has been available since June 2003. Currently, UNSD is working on an OECD implementation of the database and on a processing module.**	SI, PS
DGACM	**e-Conveyer: Resource Allocation and Scheduling System**	**Transfer the electronic version of the documents, with all reference material attached, between all services involved in the document processing.**	**Streamlining documents work flow in the department; reducing overall time and cost for documents production; improving access to working and reference documents.**	**The system's design phase has been completed. e-Conveyer has been interfaced with eDrits (electronic documents registration and information tracking system). Services of DGACM involved in document processing have been using the e-Conveyer since January 2004 (pilot stage). It is expected to reach full-scale production stage by the end of 2004.**	PS, SI, D

Resp[a]	*Project*	*Objective*	*Expected benefits*	*Progress — milestones*	*Type of return*
DGACM	Electronic Meeting Board	**Display information on meetings in real time using big plasma screens as the replacement for the boards with the manual sign plates.**	**Providing up-to-date information for meetings participants. Cost savings by eliminating manual labour of posting meetings signs.**	**Seven plasma screens (62″) were acquired in January 2004. The required outputs for plasma screens have been designed using eMeets database and the screens were operational in August 2004.**	SI, PS
DGACM	**Journal of the United Nations with hyperlinks to ODS documents**	**Provide Member States and the participants of United Nations meetings with comprehensive information about daily events at UNHQ, including meetings agenda and Web links to relevant documents stored in ODS.**	**Improving services for the Member States, United Nations organs and delegations; faster access to reference documentation.**	**The Journal of the United Nations is posted on United Nations Internet in PDF format with active links to ODS documents. The Journal archive will be created by the end of 2004 and will be available on Internet as well.**	PS, SI
DGACM	**Interpreters Assignment Programme (APG)**	**Automate the assignment of interpreters to scheduled United Nations meetings; facilitate management and statistical reporting for the interpretation services.**	**Optimization of interpretation resources by automating planning and assignment tasks; cost savings due to precise calculation of the required number of freelance interpreters; savings in administrative costs for handling daily and weekly assignments; timely and precise statistical and management reports.**	**The APG project was successfully implemented for UNHQ, UNOV, UNOG and UNON. It is used for remote United Nations conference as well. By the end of 2004, the APG system will be interfaced with eMeets (to share meetings-related data).**	PS

Resp[a]	Project	Objective	Expected benefits	Progress — milestones	Type of return
ITSD	ICT Assets (Inventory) System	Make available on the United Nations Secretariat Intranet an online inventory of ICT assets, including: software applications, hardware, communications equipment, current projects and software licence agreements.	The System will enable all offices connected to the Intranet to have access to current information on ICT assets located throughout the system worldwide. This could potentially generate significant savings as a result of sharing facilities already available elsewhere.	**New version has been in production since August 2003.**	L, D
ITSD	e-HCC	Electronic Headquarters Committee on Contracts.	The System provides automation to the processing of cases by the Headquarters Committee on Contracts. The System covers the automation of very paper-intensive processes and will enable reporting capabilities that are currently not available.	**The initial phases have been tested and are going into production in August 2004. Additional phases, including reporting, are in progress.**	PS
ITSD	Electronic Performance Appraisal System (e-PAS)	Automate the workflow involved in the preparation and disposition of PAS reports.	Streamlining of paper-intensive processes and facilitation of the preparation of management reports using the underlying database.	As of April 2004, e-PAS had been rolled out to all United Nations offices, including missions.	PS
ITSD	Software-supported drafting of resolutions	Provide automation and workflow system to the process of drafting resolutions.	Enabling of a more accurate and efficient processes in the drafting of resolutions and related documentation during informal deliberations.	To be undertaken within 2004-2005 resources.	PS

Resp[a]	*Project*	*Objective*	*Expected benefits*	*Progress — milestones*	*Type of return*
ITSD	Extranets for regional groups	Provide a secure Internet-based facility through which regional groups can deliberate remotely.	Savings can be realized, in terms of both time devoted by the participants and the resources required to support meetings. Links to documents residing in the ODS can further streamline the deliberations and improve output.	To be undertaken within 2004-2005 resources.	PS
ITSD	Personal digital assistant (PDA) integration	Enable the use of mobile/portable computing devices (namely, Palm, iPAQ) to obtain United Nations-relevant information.	Delegations will be able to access meeting-related information through mobile/portable devices, regardless of location.	To be undertaken within 2004-2005 resources.	SI
DPA	United Nations Tasking, Reporting and Information System (UNTRIS)	Enhance Department of Political Affairs capacity for information-gathering, monitoring and analysis of conflict prevention activities.	This global mapping and reporting system will provide more precise and up-to-date information to managers and desk officers.	**The first phase of the project was tested and failed to meet the substantive and technical requirements of the Department. The system was difficult to update and extend, as it was not geographical information systems (GIS) standards-compliant and therefore could not utilize external geographical data (for example, from other United Nations departments and organizations). It would have been very resource-intensive to maintain (in terms of both financing and personnel). In particular, updating of outdated country profile and map data had to be carried out manually and the news collection module could not be tied into any real-time news wire services. In addition, no analysis capability existed. No further development is planned.**	SI, D

Resp[a]	*Project*	*Objective*	*Expected benefits*	*Progress — milestones*	*Type of return*
DPA	Conversion of the Electoral Assistance Division filing system	Enable the electronic and retrieval of documents in PDF format.	Faster access to more accurate information.	**Project is on hold owing to lack of funding.**	SI
DPA	Common (Department of Political Affairs/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) geographical information system (GIS) of the Occupied Palestinian Territory	Share up-to-date and precise maps and standardized location names.	Generate more precise information and use common nomenclature.	**Project is on hold owing to lack of funding and staff resources.**	SI
DPI	Multimedia Electronic Production System	Introduction of current technology in the newsroom environment.	The system will enable a high degree of automation in new production. Efficiency, cost control and safe storage are the main benefits.	**A 21-week implementation timetable was formalized in March 2004. In March and April, experts came to UNHQ to finalize the configurations for the radio and photo modules respectively. The photo module has been fully operational since June, as scheduled, and final sign-off could be as early as September 2004. A small pilot radio module has been operational since June 2004. The majority of the production and engineering staff have been trained, and many are giving their feedback on the radio module, while the existing system is still maintained. Technical issues are being addressed to ensure the full**	SI, PS

Resp[a]	*Project*	*Objective*	*Expected benefits*	*Progress — milestones*	*Type of return*
				stability of the radio module; staff have requested modifications to the "out-of-the-box" application, on which work is under way. In view of the approaching General Assembly session, final modification of the radio module, its sign-off, and the full stress test on the entire multimedia electronic news production system will be delayed owing to resource constraints.	
DPI	UNBISnet	Upgrade the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Integrated Library Management System (ILMS) Horizon software and replace the cataloguing system.	Through the use of Unicode-compliant software, multilingual script can be supported and be linked to the ODS.	**In the third quarter of 2003, the Library upgraded its ILMS software as well as the majority of its PCs to Windows 2000. As a result of these upgrades, a new Web interface to UNBISnet was developed and launched in June 2004; ILMS is now Unicode-compliant. In addition, in 2003, all records for United Nations documentation in UNBISnet were linked to the ODS full text for available languages.**	SI
ITSD	IMIS consolidation of databases	Re-engineer the database architecture and consolidation mechanisms.	Streamlined processing of inter-office financial transactions, transfer of staff and others. Elimination of duplication of data-entry tasks. Enhanced reporting capability.	**Functional workshops were completed during 2003. Technical analysis of available solutions has commenced and is due for completion by the end of the third quarter of 2004. These options will be presented to the Department of Management during the fourth quarter of 2004, and an implementation plan and budget will be developed once the preferred option has been selected.**	PS, L, D

Resp[a]	Project	Objective	Expected benefits	Progress — milestones	Type of return
ITSD	IMIS in the field	Implement IMIS in peacekeeping missions.	Connection of peacekeeping sites to the IMIS system. Circumvention of the need to re-enter personnel data at Headquarters by allowing the operation of IMIS directly from the field.	**Sixteen missions have been connected to operate the system remotely for HR functions. A joint DPKO/DM Gap Analysis has been completed; and based on its results, the IMIS Steering Committee has approved the deployment of IMIS in the peacekeeping missions. Detailed implementation plans are being drawn up.**	PS, L
ITSD	IMIS on the Web	Re-engineer the IMIS user interface to enable its operation on the Web and to streamline the most heavily used functions.	Migration to the Web and the re-engineering will greatly facilitate the deployment in the field of all its functionality. It will also bring its technology infrastructure up to current industry standards, making it more suitable for implementation by other organizations.	**IMIS HR functionality was deployed in production at UNHQ in November 2003. The conversion of the rest of IMIS (finance, reference tables, administration) is expected to be completed at the end of 2004.**	PS, L
ITSD	IMIS reporting on the Web	Replace Paradox as the front-end reporting tool for IMIS.	Reports will be able to be delivered on the Web and provide greater flexibility to users of the system.	**In progress. Software selection completed in January 2004. Pilot project to be completed June 2004, with implementation in UNHQ by end-2004. The schedule for implementation in Offices Away from Headquarters (OAHs) is to be determined.**	L, SI

Resp[a]	Project	Objective	Expected benefits	Progress — milestones	Type of return
ITSD	IMIS 24x7 operations	Allow concurrent online and batch mode processing.	Increased availability of the system to online users, including those in remote time zones.	**Initial work seeks to maximize use of existing system resources without fully re-engineering overnight/online processing. To date, concurrent processing for Payroll phases 2 and 3 are deployed in production, allowing the reduction of processing time considerably. "Off-line" trial payroll runs also have been implemented, reducing the requirement for use of system resources overnight. The work to separate processing of Payroll regular accounting from retro-accounting is in progress and expected to be completed by end of 2004. Cumulatively, these changes result in increased availability of the system to online users, especially in missions.**	L
OMIOS	Key Items Management Reporting System	Reporting of key management performance indicators.	**Using data that resides in IMIS and other enterprise-wide systems, the system provides management-level information on performance (or divergence) against established goals.**	**Institutionalization of usage of system and technical support, and integration of indicators into next generation of reporting systems in progress.**	D

Resp[a]	*Project*	*Objective*	*Expected benefits*	*Progress — milestones*	*Type of return*
OCHA	Intranet/ Portal/Virtual Library throughout the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Provide easy access to tools that increase efficiency in the Office's work; promote and facilitate information-sharing among staff in 25 different offices around the world.	Increased efficiency; avoidance of duplication of work; staff better informed of the latest developments.	**Document repository and web interface ready December 2003; Prototype Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Intranet (based on redesigned "OCHA Online"), including integration of document repository, ready April 2004. Partial Intranet deployed at Headquarters (New York and Geneva) and field offices, August 2004; full deployment by end-2004. Integration with United Nations Intranet, 2005.**	PS, D
OHRM	Galaxy-R2	Web site to assist staff members in separation (administration and benefits due by the Organization) and web tool that enables human resources practitioners, staff members and external applicants to set match criteria for United Nations advertised posts and online inventory of pre-approved United Nations consultants and individual contractors.	Assistance to staff members in respect of a correct and timely administrative separation, as well as the calculation of the benefits due by the Organization; review of all vacancies on the Internet and provision of information to the "client" when a vacancy has been issued in the highlighted area; creation of an automated tool to pre-approve consultants working for the United Nations, using a process similar to e-staffing. Provision of close and efficient monitoring of consultants from a centralized platform.	**e-Authentication, e-Contact and "My United Nations" launched December 2003, implementation continues. E-Authentication set the foundation for making HR data available to staff members for review and update. Release 2 of Galaxy, "dot net" architecture and enhancements to the e-Staffing module of Galaxy scheduled for the third quarter of 2004.**	SI, PS

Resp[a]	*Project*	*Objective*	*Expected benefits*	*Progress — milestones*	*Type of return*
OHRM	United Nations Secretariat skills directory	Build an electronic directory following the organizational structure of the Secretariat.	Enabling the global search for specific competencies within the Organization and facilitating the creation of communities of practice.	**Work is ongoing.**	L, D
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs information management project	Provide for tracking of legal matters assigned; provide for document and archival records management; provide for online publication of public information legal materials.	More efficient case management; more efficient document management, filing, retrieval and legal research; increased understanding of international legal norms.	**Software and hardware were acquired, scanning has started for some document collections and regular correspondence. In second half of 2004, the OLA Registry files will begin to be scanned by an outside data service bureau.**	PS
OLA	Integration of all the elements of the United Nations Treaty Collection on the Internet into the internal Treaty Database/ Workflow system	Provide the end-users with online access to the latest treaty-related information.	Broader online access to the treaties registered with the United Nations Secretariat, including their full texts.	**The following activities have been/are being undertaken: (a) integration of desktop-published treaties into existing Web publishing database and its upgrade to a new software version — completed; (b) Web publishing of the upgraded treaty database — completed; (c) Web publication of: Treaty Event books, Treaty Handbook, Handbook of Final Clauses, Recently Deposited Multilateral Treaties, Summary of Practice of the Secretary-General as Depositary of Multilateral Treaties — ongoing; (d) Certified True Copies, Monthly Statement of Treaties and International Agreements, Depositary Notifications by the Secretary-General and other material — ongoing development; (e) full text search capability, full text**	SI

Resp[a]	*Project*	*Objective*	*Expected benefits*	*Progress — milestones*	*Type of return*
				indexing of the entire United Nations Treaty Collection — target for completion:September/ October 2004; and (f) data validation to enhance the accuracy of online searches for older treaties and treaty actions, including the League of Nations agreements — completed.	
OLA	**Integration of all the elements of the United Nations Treaty Collection on the Internet into the internal Treaty Database/ Workflow system**	Allow for automatic updates on the Internet reflecting the corresponding updates in the internal system.		**Implemented.**	
OLA	**Further enhancement of the United Nations Treaty Collection on the Internet**	Ensure full text search capability for all bilateral and multilateral treaties in the database.	More accurate and timely information on the Web.	**Was implemented in part related to the United Nations Treaty Series search and retrieval. To be completed for the Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General — target: September/October 2004.**	
OLA	**Further enhancement of the United Nations Treaty Collection on the Internet**	**Convert to XML and PDF formats the treaty-related data and redesign the interface using XLS for more efficient display of information.**	Effective online search and retrieval system offering enhanced navigation options and easy to operate.	**Was implemented.**	

Resp[a]	*Project*	*Objective*	*Expected benefits*	*Progress — milestones*	*Type of return*
OLA	Conversion to CD-ROM of the United Nations Treaty Series publications	Provide cost-effective facility for expeditious and convenient electronic full text search and retrieval of the United Nations Treaty Series and related publications at any location in the world.	Effective information delivery and distribution process.	Funding options being explored.	SI
ITSD	Internet search engine	Provide multilingual search capabilities to all users of the United Nations Internet site.	High performance search capabilities for all web-page-based content enabled. Long-standing need to have adequate search capabilities in all United Nations official languages addressed.	**On 12 September 2003, DPI formally announced the availability of Google search on the United Nations web site. The search in six official languages is working well.**	SI, L
ITSD	Open access to Official Document System (ODS)	Enable Internet access to ODS to non-governmental organizations and the general public.	At present, ODS is available free of charge but on a limited basis to permanent missions and capitals. Non-governmental organizations and other organizations are provided access on a fee-for-service basis. Enabling free access to the system would greatly facilitate the dissemination of official documentation, avoiding the need to reproduce documents on the United Nations web site.	**The budget request for the implementation of free ODS was approved by the General Assembly in December 2003. ITSD issued requisitions in February 2004 to purchase software and hardware that are required for the implementation. Servers arrived in July 2004. Currently, the preparation of the infrastructure and tests are under way. Actual implementation and full test will take place in third quarter. Parallel tests in third-fourth quarters. Production operations expected to start in fourth quarter of 2004.**	SI, L

Resp[a]	Project	Objective	Expected benefits	Progress — milestones	Type of return
ITSD	Extranet for the United Nations system	Facilitate knowledge sharing among United Nations system organizations.	Availability of useful information to all relevant users in the United Nations system in a secure manner.	**Currently, 52 United Nations system organizations are accessing the United Nations Extranet. Thirty-one organizations are accessing the Extranet through site-to-site VPN, 15 through the WAN, and 6 through the LAN. Currently, 10 applications are on the Extranet, such as the Directory of Senior Officials, United Nations Common System Salaries and Allowances, United Nations System Chart, United Nations System Locator, United Nations System Vacancies, UNSECOORD, etc.**	L
UNFIP	Project Management Information System	Provide the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) with an integrated system with project management and monitoring capabilities and provide United Nations implementing partners with Web-based application to permit submission electronically of periodic progress and financial reports.	Replacement of current spreadsheet applications that are maintained with labour-intensive operating methods by relational database application and Web-based reporting capabilities. Streamlining of data capture, maintenance and analysis; enabling of standardization of management reports; and improved timeliness of submissions.	**Owing to budget constraints, new partnering possibilities, requirements simplification, and the resultant scope changes, this project as originally defined will not proceed but will be reconstituted into one or more future initiatives.**	PS

[a] Body responsible.

Abbreviations used:

D	support for decision-making process
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat
DGACM	Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
DPA	Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat
DPI	Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat
HR	human resources
IMIS	Integrated Management Information System
ITSD	Information Technology Services Division
L	leveraging past investments
LAN	local area network
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat
ODS	Official Document System of the United Nations
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management of the United Nations Secretariat
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat
OMIOS	Office for Management Improvement and Oversight Support
PC	personal computer
PDF	portable document format
PS	process streamlining
SI	service improvement
UNBIS	United Nations Bibliographic Information System
UNHQ	United Nations Headquarters
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
UNON	United Nations Office at Nairobi
UNOV	United Nations Office at Vienna
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNSECOORD	Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator
VPN	virtual private networking
WAN	wide area network
XLS	Excel spreadsheets
XML	extensible markup language

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Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 57/5 of 16 October 2002, entitled "Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive measures as a means of political and economic compulsion", the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the resolution.

2. Pursuant to that request, in a note verbale dated 24 March 2004, the Secretary-General invited Governments to provide any information that they might wish to contribute to the preparation of the report.

3. The present report reproduces the replies received from Governments as at 9 August 2004. Further replies will be reproduced in addenda to the present document.

II. Replies received from Governments

Belarus

[Original: Russian]
[30 April 2004]

1. At the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the delegation of the Republic of Belarus voted in favour of the adoption of resolution 57/5 of 16 October 2002. The Republic of Belarus strongly believes that States should abandon the practice of applying unilateral extraterritorial coercive measures in violation of the universally recognized norms of international law as a means of political and economic compulsion. The operation of such measures undermines the sovereignty of other States and impedes the achievement of the legitimate interests of their entities and individuals, and also violates the principles of the United Nations.

2. The Republic of Belarus has not applied and has no intention of applying any unilateral extraterritorial measures of economic compulsion against foreign States, or their entities or individuals.

Costa Rica

[Original: Spanish]
[10 May 2004]

1. Costa Rica, as a member of the World Trade Organization, respects and complies with its principles, including the rejection of extraterritorial coercive economic measures imposed unilaterally on any State.

2. Costa Rica, which respects international law, favours international free trade, and would support a limitation thereof only if it was in conformity with international law, whether within the framework of the United Nations or that of the World Trade Organization.

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[4 July 2004]

1. The Government of the Republic of Cuba reiterates its firm rejection of any application of extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion.

2. The General Assembly, in numerous resolutions, has opposed the implementation of such measures as they violate the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles, objectives and norms of the World Trade Organization.

3. International conferences and world summits held under the auspices of the United Nations on economic and social issues have also rejected such practices as they impede the full exercise of the right to development of peoples and impair the progress of international economic cooperation for development.

4. The General Assembly has also repeatedly rejected the promotion of the use by any State of such measures or of similar measures intended to coerce another State in order to subordinate the exercise of its sovereign rights. The Assembly has also strongly affirmed that the promulgation of such laws constitutes interference in the internal affairs of States and the violation of their sovereignty incompatible with the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States proclaimed in its resolution 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974.

5. It is also worth pointing out that the implementation of unilateral coercive economic measures contravenes the letter and spirit of the Millennium Declaration (General Assembly resolution 55/2) and hinders the efforts made in the context of the United Nations by the international community to achieve the development goals set, in particular, the one that aims to promote a global partnership for development and to bring into being "an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system".

6. It has been shown in practice that it is mainly the developing countries that are affected by the implementation of unilateral coercive economic measures by the developed countries, which persist in their use, overlooking the fact that they have generally been rejected by the international community.

7. One example of the clear application of such measures is the policy of the Government of the United States of America, which openly and brazenly imposes sanctions on a number of countries, most of them developing countries, and in particular imposes a genocidal economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba the purpose of which is to destroy the political, economic and social system that has been chosen and given legal force by the Cuban people.

8. This aggressive and hostile policy of the United States of America against Cuba, which has been applied unilaterally over more than 45 years, aims to subjugate the Cuban people, through starvation and desperation, ignoring its almost unanimous rejection by the General Assembly, which, since 1992 and on 12 consecutive occasions with a growing majority, has come out against the economic, financial and commercial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

9. The Torricelli Act, passed in 1992, abruptly cut off Cuba's purchases of medicine and food from subsidiaries of United States companies based outside United States territory and established strict prohibitions on maritime traffic from and to Cuba, thus institutionalizing clear extraterritorial provisions having the force of law.

10. In 1996 the Helms-Burton Act was passed, which, in particular, fine-tuned the machinery of repression down to the most insignificant economic, commercial and financial link between United States companies and Cuba; increased the number and enlarged the scope of the extraterritorial provisions with the objective of taking legal action against any transaction or deal that benefited the Cuban economy; prosecuted and punished foreign investors in Cuba; authorized the funding of hostile, subversive and aggressive acts against the Cuban people, including the war of disinformation on the airwaves, improving broadcasts from the misnamed Television and Radio Martí; and set up a programme designed to destroy the constitutional system established by the Cuban people and to impose "regime change" to ensure the realization of the objectives of imperialist circles in the United States to impose domination on the Cuban nation.

11. On 6 May 2004, the United States Government, in despair at not having managed to destroy the Cuban Revolution, announced a set of new measures proposed by the so-called "Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba" to expedite the collapse of the Cuban economic and social system and to control what has come to be called "regime change" in Cuba.

12. As if there were inadequate evidence of the United States Government's contempt for the present and future of the Cuban people, of its lack of respect for the will of the international community and of its mockery of the legitimate interest of United States citizens in establishing normal and reasonable relations with Cuba, the measures, which are now accompanied by specific implementing regulations, significantly tighten up the economic blockade against the country, principally through the increase in restrictions on travel to Cuba by United States citizens and by Cubans resident in the United States and the discouragement of tourism to the island from third countries; the reduction in the number of people sending and receiving family remittances, thus interfering with the sensitive and private sphere of family relations; and the increase in the prosecution of foreign businessmen who have commercial or other relations with Cuba, and Cuban companies themselves that have links with the foreign sector of the economy.

13. The Government of the Republic of Cuba, on behalf of the Cuban people, is firmly opposed to unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures, which are profoundly detrimental to multilateralism, international cooperation between States, the right of peoples to self-determination and the right to development and which hinder the work of the United Nations. The Cuban Government is thus in favour of coordinated and decisive action by the vast majority of States Members of the Organization, which reject such measures, in order to put an end to their application.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

[Original: English]
[20 May 2004]

1. Unilateral extraterritorial coercive measures are in full contravention of the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, relevant laws and declarations and programmes of action adopted by the General Assembly and major United Nations conferences.

2. Coercive measures pursue political objectives such as subversion of another country's regime by violating the people's rights to existence and development, as well as other fundamental rights, and imposing unbearable suffering and misery.

3. In 1989, the challenging issue of eliminating unilateral coercive measures began to be considered as an agenda item of the General Assembly and from 1997 onwards the resolution on the subject gained an overwhelming and irreversible majority, with only the United States always opposing it.

4. For more than half a century, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been the target of unilateral coercive measures by the United States in pursuit of a hostile policy, only because it does not share the United States' political values. The United States has been restlessly imposing all kinds of unilateral economic sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including financial and monetary embargoes. The United States must give up its cold-war-era thinking and nullify all the coercive measures it has taken in the past so that it could prove its sincerity and trust before the international community, which is desirous of peace and development.

5. It is the principled and unchanged position of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to oppose unilateral coercive measures as a means of political and economic compulsion.

6. Member States are called upon neither to recognize nor to apply unilateral extraterritorial coercive measures imposed by the United States, which contravene recognized principles of international law.

Iran (Islamic Republic of)

[Original: English]
[6 July 2004]

1. The General Assembly adopted, successively, resolutions 51/22 of 27 November 1996, 53/10 of 26 October 1998, 55/6 of 26 October 2000 and 57/5 of 16 October 2002, in which it expressed its deep concern at the negative impact of unilaterally imposed extraterritorial coercive economic measures on trade, financial and economic cooperation at the regional and international levels.

2. The Member States, in adopting those resolutions, have rejected the application of extraterritorial coercive economic measures or legislative enactments unilaterally imposed by any State. They have also called for the repeal of unilateral extraterritorial laws that impose sanctions on corporations and nationals of other States.

3. The promulgation and application of laws or regulations that have extraterritorial effect or that affect the sovereignty of other States and the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction — a clear violation of the universally accepted principles of international law — have been strongly rejected on various occasions by the overwhelming majority of States.

4. The South Summit, held in Havana from 10 to 14 April 2000, and the 13th Conference of Heads of States or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, held in Kuala Lumpur from 20 to 25 February 2003, called for the elimination and rejection of coercive economic and extraterritorial implementation of such laws against developing countries and condemned the application of such measures.

5. Simultaneously, an increasing number of voices, in multilateral forums, regional bodies and the private sector, have joined the international community and called for the total elimination and lifting of unilateral extraterritorial and other forms of coercive economic measures.

6. Coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion, in particular through the enactment of extraterritorial legislation, are not only against the well-recognized provisions and principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, but also threaten the basic fabric of international peace, security and stability and violate the sovereignty of States. They also impede and constrain the settlement of disputes through the promotion of mutual dialogue, understanding and peaceful means.

7. In an era of rapid and unprecedented change, the world needs peace, security and stability through the collective endeavours of all countries and also with respect for sovereignty as well as refraining from interfering in the internal affairs of other States. Indeed world peace and security are dependent on the existence of an enabling environment in which conflicts are resolved through peaceful means and unequal relations are replaced with just and mutually respectful partnerships.

8. Such coercive measures have a serious adverse impact on the overall economic, commercial, political, social and cultural life of the targeted countries and their peoples and intensify the challenges they face in a time of globalization and its concomitant traumatic transformations. In addition, they have an adverse impact on the transfer of technology, increase the rate of investment risks, threaten financial and monetary management, weaken industrial and agricultural infrastructures and undermine the commercial policies of the targeted countries.

9. Moreover, such measures reduce existing actual and potential capacities of targeted countries in the very important areas of health and education, which are basic elements in every social welfare programme. This in itself delays the development of their economic infrastructure, intensifies poverty in its various aspects and results in further exacerbation of the regional, social and economic outlook.

10. In this context, it is incumbent on the international community to establish necessary ways and means to compensate for the losses of targeted countries by those who resort to such unilateral measures. All countries should, in the true spirit of multilateralism and strict observance of international laws and regulations, avoid resorting to and enacting such measures.

11. Enforcement of unilateral coercive economic measures, in defiance of the Charter, has inflicted grave and irreparable losses, including a heavy financial and human toll, on the targeted countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as one of the affected countries, therefore reserves its right to pursue its financial and intellectual claims and to lodge complaints against Governments enacting those measures.

Japan

[Original: English]
[19 May 2004]

1. The Government of Japan is not imposing any of the economic measures referred to in General Assembly resolution 57/5 of 16 October 2002 and is not subject to such measures.

2. The Government of Japan takes the position that unilateral economic measures that are taken as the result of extraterritorial application of domestic laws are contrary to international law and thus unacceptable. Based on this position, it voted in favour of the above-mentioned resolution.

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

[Original: Arabic]
[6 July 2004]

1. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya reaffirms its condemnation and firm rejection of any measures that bar any State from exercising its full political rights to select its political, economic and social systems, because this constitutes a flagrant violation of the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970.

2. The General Assembly has on a number of occasions expressed its concern at extraterritorial laws enacted by certain States that violate the sovereignty of other States and impair the interests of corporations and their personnel. All the instruments and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in this regard affirm that the enactment of such laws undermines the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, is a gross violation of the norms of international law, inflicts serious economic damage on developing and developed countries alike and impedes the endeavours of the international community aimed at constructive cooperation and mutually beneficial exchange.

3. The General Assembly has also affirmed that the enactment of such laws is an interference in the internal affairs of States and a violation of their sovereignty and is incompatible with international instruments such as the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of Their Independence and Sovereignty, adopted by the Assembly in its resolution 2131 (XX) of 21 December 1965, and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, proclaimed by the Assembly in its resolution 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974. Both these instruments specify that no State is entitled to use or encourage the use of economic or political measures or any other form of pressure to coerce

another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its political rights.

4. By adopting such resolutions and instruments, the General Assembly has given clear expression to the overwhelming rejection by Member States of coercive measures and the strength of the opposition to the use of such measures against other States as a means of compulsion and of forcing them to accept policies that are not appropriate for or satisfactory to them. An international consensus has developed with regard to the need for a halt to be put to such measures, which have been adopted by certain States in the furtherance of their foreign policy and employed in their dealings with other States.

5. In addition, other international organizations, including the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States and the Group of 77 and China, have rejected coercive measures, while the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union has demanded the immediate cessation of such measures. Meetings of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, at the heads of State and Government and ministerial levels, have condemned such laws and the insistence of some States on applying and reinforcing them unilaterally, have affirmed that such measures as the D'Amato-Kennedy Act represent a violation of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations and have called upon the international community to take effective measures to halt this tendency.

6. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya also urges the States of the world to make clear to any State or States taking such measures and insisting that they continue to be implemented that this is a glaring error that must not continue. The sovereignty of such State or States is not superior to that of any other State and the international community has not delegated to them the administration of global affairs through their domestic legislation.

7. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya again urges the international community strongly to reject the imposition of laws and prescriptions that have extraterritorial effects and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, and reiterates the urgent need for them to be repealed forthwith. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya stresses that measures of this type are not merely destructive of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in international law, but also pose a grave threat to freedom of trade and investment. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya calls on the international community not to recognize or implement such measures.

Malaysia

[Original: English]
[28 May 2004]

1. Malaysia voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 57/5 of 16 October 2002, in which the Assembly called for the end of imposition of unilateral coercive economic measures on individuals or corporations of other States. It also called upon all States not to recognize or apply such measures imposed by any State, which are contrary to the principles of international law.

2. Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to article 32 of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 3281 (XXIX) of 12 December 1974, article 32 of which states: "No States may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights."

3. For this reason, Malaysia does not impose unilateral coercive, economic measures on corporations or individuals of other States.

Pakistan

[Original: English]
[12 April 2004]

Pakistan is fully in observance of resolution 57/5 of 16 October 2002, entitled "Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion".

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[12 May 2004]

The State of Qatar has not taken or participated in any coercive unilateral economic measures across regional borders as a means of political or economic coercion against any State and such sanctions have not been imposed on the State of Qatar by any other State.

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Item 96 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family: United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all

Implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 57/166 of 18 December 2002.**

* A/59/150.

** The report could not be submitted at the slotted time, as UNESCO had sent the report on 12 August 2004.

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Implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Summary

In its resolution 57/166 of 18 December 2002, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in cooperation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to prepare a report on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade to be presented to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The report has four main aims: first, to report on the international, regional and national activities undertaken to launch the Decade; second, to provide information on the activities of United Nations organizations and other partners to advance literacy during 2003 and through to May 2004; third, to present examples of current literacy projects from around the world to demonstrate what is being done to address the objectives of the Literacy Decade internationally, nationally and locally; and fourth, to offer recommendations to strengthen the Literacy Decade effort.

The report highlights the fact that present indicators suggest that the international community will not meet the literacy commitments made either by the end of the Literacy Decade in 2012 or by the education-for-all (EFA) target date of 2015 if present trends continue. Illiteracy is a serious problem, for individuals, communities and societies alike, that needs far greater attention and resources than it is currently receiving. The fundamental purpose of the Literacy Decade is to increase national and international efforts to address this problem. The time for action has come.

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I. Introduction

A. Overview

1. In its resolution 56/116 of 19 December 2001 entitled "United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all", the General Assembly decided that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) should take on a coordinating role in stimulating and catalysing the activities undertaken at the international level within the framework of the Decade. Further, in its resolution 57/166 of 18 December 2002, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director-General of UNESCO, to prepare a report on the implementation of the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade to be submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session opening in September 2004.

2. The present report presents an overview of the challenges the world must overcome to meet the literacy objectives established for the Decade. It strongly argues that increased political and financial support to tackle illiteracy is urgently required. The report warns that from present indications, the international community will not meet the literacy commitments it has made either by the end of the decade in 2012 or by the education-for-all (EFA) target date of 2015 if present trends continue.

3. Nevertheless, the Decade probably represents our best chance to deal with this issue. Illiteracy is a serious problem, for individuals, communities and societies alike, which needs far greater attention and resources than it is currently receiving. The fundamental purpose of the Decade is to increase national and international efforts to address this problem. The time for action has come.

4. This report concludes with recommendations for the future and a plea for the political will and increased resources required to effectively address the literacy problems facing many countries, especially but not only in the developing world. The success of the Decade will depend on the commitments made and actions taken by all stakeholders, including Governments, United Nations organizations, development agencies, donors, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, communities and individuals. Just as education for all is everyone's responsibility, so, too, is the United Nations Literacy Decade.

B. Current state of literacy in the world

5. What, then, is the state of literacy in the world today? Recent estimates suggest that approximately 862 million adults (persons over age 15) were illiterate in the year 2000.[1] Because of the limitations affecting the quality of the statistical assessment of and reporting on literacy worldwide, many experts think that this number represents a considerable underestimation of the situation and suggest that the truer figure may be closer to 1 billion people.

6. Official estimates indicate that 140 million of the 862 million people who were illiterate were young people (aged 15-24 years). An equally disturbing statistic is that in 2000, over 104 million school-age children did not even have access to schooling and that girls were less likely than boys to enjoy such access.[2] Furthermore, there continues to be a marked gender dimension to adult illiteracy: in

2000, two thirds of illiterate adults were women and there were 236 million more illiterate women than illiterate men.

7. The stark reality, therefore, is that one in five adults on the planet and tens of millions of school-age children do not read and write. This is both appalling and unacceptable. As the Secretary-General said in his remarks at the official launch of the Decade: "The fact that 20 per cent of the world's adults are deprived of it (literacy) should fill us all with shame."[3]

C. What is the United Nations Literacy Decade designed to accomplish?

8. In policy terms, the Decade is primarily focused on the realization of the six goals contained in the Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments.[4] Literacy is not limited to just one or a few of these EFA goals; rather, as stated in the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade: "Literacy is the common thread that runs through the six goals."[5]

9. Nonetheless, the specific commitments made in the Dakar Framework for Action are worth noting: achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults (goal 4); ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes (goal 3); and improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (goal 6).

10. In addition to the EFA agenda agreed in Dakar, another central policy dimension of the Decade is the United Nations Millennium Declaration[6] with its Millennium Development Goals proclaimed on 8 September 2000. The primary focus of the Millennium Development Goals is upon the eradication of poverty. There is no question that the achievement of literacy and the eradication of poverty are linked.

11. The Fast-Track Initiative, led by the World Bank, is focused on meeting the Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal completion of primary education by 2015. This is another part of the policy framework of the Decade, as the successful completion of primary education by children and youth will help to staunch the flow of young illiterate persons into the pool of adult illiterate persons, thereby adding to their total.

12. While all agree that the education of children is critically important, the evidence (statistical and otherwise) makes it clear that Governments and agencies need to expand their attention to adult literacy and learning as well. The reason is that parents influence their children, both in word and in deed. Literate parents raise literate children. Research findings show that parents with higher levels of education and literacy are in a better position to build a strong foundation for literacy in their children.[7] Yet, there are millions of adults who cannot read and write, and millions more whose literacy skills are insufficient. Ensuring that these mothers and fathers can read is an urgent and pressing concern.[8]

13. It is clearly desirable that United Nations policies should reflect an integrated approach to the realization of the EFA goals and the Millennium Development

Goals. An endeavour of the magnitude of the Literacy Decade can succeed only if the macropolicy instruments driving the effort are appropriately aligned. The importance of this cannot be underestimated. For the Decade to succeed, there must be a clear recognition of the extent to which the presence or absence of literacy skills in a population is linked to the potential for societies to deal with poverty, discrimination, poor health, social exclusion and powerlessness. Literacy is at the heart of the social, political, cultural, economic and civic well-being of all individuals, both children and adults, as well as that of communities, societies and nations.

D. Will the world achieve the goals of the Decade?

14. According to present trends, it is unlikely that the goals of the Decade will be met unless appropriate actions are taken. Sadly, available evidence suggests that the fourth Dakar goal calling for a 50 per cent improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, will not be met in over 70 countries. Current projections are that there will be roughly 800 million illiterate adults worldwide in 2015.[9] Moreover, it is estimated that the majority (63 per cent) will be women. Estimates suggest that illiterate women will outnumber illiterate men by a projected 215 million in 2015.

15. The statistics presented in the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4* show that 98 per cent of adults who lack literacy, or 857 million people, live in the developing world. The *Report* states: "Almost half of the world's illiterates live in South and West Asia. Their numbers are still increasing and mainly reflect the situation of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. The East Asia and the Pacific region accounts for almost a further quarter."[10] Sub-Saharan Africa has almost 136 million illiterates. These three regions account for 70 per cent of the world total. Sixty-one per cent of those who lack literacy live in the four most populous countries of the world: China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India.

16. As noted earlier, in 2000 there were 140 million illiterate young people (aged 15-24 years) in the world, of whom 86 million were female. Even assuming growth in primary education over the next decade, a projected 113 million young people will be illiterate in 2015, 60 million of them female.[11] If these forecasts are accurate and if current trends continue unchanged, the Dakar targets will not be met.

17. Tragically, scourges like poverty, exploitation, poor health and illiteracy go hand in hand. It is not a coincidence that where illiteracy is high, people face other, often dire, challenges. Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, is scarred by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In parts of North Africa, in the Arab States and in South and East Asia, democracy is fragile and human rights, especially for women and girls, are severely limited. It is widely acknowledged that illiteracy compounds the conditions of deprivation and subordination to which women and girls in many parts of the world are being subjected.

18. However, the challenges of the Decade are not restricted to the costs and impediments imposed by illiteracy alone. Low literacy skills rob millions more of opportunities, limit their potential, and curtail their political and economic participation. The findings of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) suggest that upward of 20 per cent of the adult population of the 20 countries participating in the Survey, including countries with the world's highest literacy

rates, have only rudimentary literacy skills. On average, the literacy skills of a further 20 per cent are below the level the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) thinks necessary for full participation in those societies and economies which are among the richest in the world.

19. The statistics cited point towards an unavoidable conclusion, namely, that national and international literacy efforts have been inadequate up to now. Every nation, from the poorest of the poor to the most technologically advanced and economically powerful, has literacy concerns. The Literacy Decade is designed to be the framework within which a much stronger impulse can be given to literacy efforts in the years ahead by all countries and development partners, working together and pursuing the same objectives.

E. What does literacy mean in the context of the Decade?

20. The meaning of the word "literacy" in the framework of the Decade is more complex than people might first imagine. We have long realized that literacy is not one term of a simple dichotomy — it is not something that you either have or don't have. There are levels of literacy skill, as demonstrated by IALS and the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL), which the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) being developed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and its partners will endeavour to measure. Consequently, the questions of policy makers and literacy experts go far beyond simply asking whether someone can read and write. More relevant are answers to the following questions: How well do people read and write? How do they use these skills in their daily lives? What are they challenged to do with these skills? How can these skills be maintained and enhanced? What are the related problem-solving and life skills required by society and the economy? How can countries raise the literacy levels of their populations?

21. Literacy, to put it simply, "is about more than reading and writing — it is about how we communicate in society. It is about social practices and relations, about knowledge, language and culture".[12] Literacy reaches into and affects many areas of life. Literacy provides access to opportunities to learn, to find better employment[13] and to earn higher financial rewards.[14] Literacy also affects social status, political participation, cultural expression, linguistic survival, access to health care, the effective delivery of social services, and more.[15] For individuals, the presence of literacy expands life opportunities, and expands the ability to participate meaningfully in all aspects of life; the absence of literacy contracts life opportunities and limits the ability to participate meaningfully in all aspects of life. The Decade defines literacy in this holistic way.

II. Launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade: highlights

A. International launch of the Decade

22. "Literacy as freedom" was the motto adopted for the official launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade. The inaugural ceremonies were co-chaired by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO and held at the New York Public Library on 13 February 2003. The President of

Mongolia, representing the nation that had sponsored the resolution to establish the Decade, was present along with other notables including First Lady Mrs. Laura Bush, who assumed the role of Honorary Ambassador of the Decade at the request of UNESCO, and the President of the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA). The launch included a media event, the opening of an inter-agency exhibition on literacy at United Nations Headquarters which lasted six weeks, and the distribution of Decade information kits and publications.

23. In their inaugural presentations at the launch, the two co-chairs explained the reasons why the Decade is needed, noting that in these, the beginning years of the twenty-first century, one-fifth of all adults were unable to read and write. They acknowledged literacy as the key to unlocking the cage of human misery, to delivering the potential of every human being and to opening up a future of freedom and hope. They affirmed that the Decade must translate such hope into reality. They also affirmed that the Decade was a call to focus the world's collective will on the enormity of the task ahead, going beyond efforts of the past to apply lessons learned from past experience. The Literacy Decade, they said, was a reminder that literacy was a human right. Fifty-five years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 217 A (III)) had established that everyone had the right to education. The co-chairs concluded that the fact that approximately 20 per cent of the world's adults were deprived of education should "fill us all with shame".[16]

B. The world's regions launch the Decade

1. Africa

24. The Literacy Decade was launched in the African region in conjunction with the biennial meeting of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) at Grand Baie, Mauritius, from 2 to 4 December 2003. The event was organized by the Government of Mauritius and UNESCO. At the launch ceremony, the President of Mauritius stressed the importance of linking literacy to gender. He also raised the issue of the promotion of literate environments, stating that the Decade should not be confined to seminar rooms and discussion groups and that it needed to reach the grass-roots level, ensuring the participation of all.

25. A number of African countries held special national events to launch the Decade. The President of Mozambique launched the Decade in that country on 30 April 2003 in a ceremony held at the Noresta Basic General School in Maputo. Senegal's launch took place on 14 September 2003 at Mbour in a ceremony presided over by its President, who reaffirmed the country's commitment to eradicating illiteracy. The Government of Guinea launched the Decade at an event held in Kondeba on 15 July 2003, using the occasion to draw attention to the country's literacy challenges. Mali chose mid-October as the time for its launch; a four-day workshop was held from 13 to 16 October to review the state of non-formal learning in the country and to launch the Decade.

2. Arab region

26. The Arab region launched the Literacy Decade in Tunisia during the Arab Regional Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) Mid-decade Review held in Hammamet, Tunis, from 15 to 18 July 2003. Seventeen Arab

countries were present in addition to members of the Arab Network for Adult Education and Literacy, and other non-governmental organizations and civil society groups. The launch signalled the start of a newspaper and television media campaign organized by UNESCO Beirut.[17]

3. Asia-Pacific region

27. The Asia-Pacific region of UNESCO launched the Decade on 8 September 2003 (International Literacy Day) in Bangkok, Thailand, with technical and financial support from the Governments of Thailand and Japan. The launch occurred in conjunction with the Thai celebrations of Education Week and the opening of the Mid-term Review of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTAE+6).

28. Earlier in the year, on 2 April 2003, Thailand had held its national launch of the Decade and kicked off a national literacy essay contest and drawing competition, the results of which were on display in September at the Asia-Pacific inauguration of the Decade. During the summer, the Ministry of Education in Pakistan issued information kits entitled "Guidelines for the Strategic Framework of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade in Pakistan" explaining the country's policies in the field of literacy. In December, UNESCO Islamabad and the Pakistan Ministry of Primary and Mass Education held a subregional training workshop on literacy and non-formal education as a means of alleviating poverty.

4. Latin America and the Caribbean region

29. The Latin America and the Caribbean regional launch was held in Santiago, Chile, at the Second Latin American Regional Meeting of EFA National Coordinators and Representatives of Civil Society Organizations, held on 24 September 2003.

30. On 20 May 2003, UNESCO-Brazil, the Ministry of Education, the Senate and other parliamentarians launched the United Nations Literacy Decade in Brazil. To mark the occasion, UNESCO-Brazil and the Ministry of Education signed an agreement for the training of literacy and adult educators.

31. Peru has also been engaged in celebrating the Decade. The Government drew attention to the Decade by establishing a target of a 50 per cent reduction in illiteracy by 2012 as part of its National Literacy Programme.[18] The Government announced that, between 2001 and 2003, 383,519 illiterate people from 19 regions of Peru had received training and 128,572 had been certified as literate. At the same time, 600 District Committees for Literacy had been created. Plans call for the training of 120,000 illiterate persons in 2004. From 2005 to 2012, an additional 250,000 persons will be trained annually, according to government plans.

32. In Saint Lucia, the Official Launch of the Decade took place on 4 and 5 February 2003 as part of a Symposium on "Literacy and Gender: A National Concern". The Governor General of Saint Lucia declared the Decade open on the island. This two-day event featured presentations on the state of literacy in the Caribbean, literacy and the teacher, literacy and productivity, male underachievement in the schools system, and gender participation in the National Enrichment and Learning Programme as well as presentations by regional participants from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

33. The Ministry of Education in El Salvador reported a broad range of actions for the first year of the Decade. Approval was given for an EFA Action Plan (2003-2015), 5,000 literacy circles were organized, 100,000 people were beneficiaries of literacy programmes, and 200 teacher-training courses were established, among other things.

34. In Paraguay, the Ministry of Education and Culture reported that it had created both formal and non-formal literacy programmes as part of its Decade-related efforts.[19] The formal Programme of Bilingual Education for Youth and Adults (PRODEPA KO'E PYAHU) offers literacy and basic education for persons who have not finished their primary education. In 2003, 24,000 persons were registered, with an anticipated target of 185,000 enrolments within four years. During 2003, curricula, educational kits, textbooks, manuals for evaluation and other materials were designed, produced and distributed by the programme. A new building for the Dirección de Jóvenes y Adultos, including a training centre, opened in April 2004. The programme has also started a distance education component via Internet called "Aula Mentor". Special attention is paid to literacy and basic education in prisons, through bilingual basic education and in-service training for teachers, experts and administrative staff.

5. European and North American activities

35. The launch ceremony for the Decade in Canada was held on 4 September 2003 at the country's National Library in Ottawa. Broadcast live in French and English, the Canadian launch programme featured Ms. Kim Phuc Phan Thi, the woman whose childhood image had captured the world and defined the Vietnam War. Ms. Phuc, now a Canadian citizen and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Peace, chronicled her own learning journey and the challenges she had faced along the way.

36. In Washington, D.C., a special celebration to mark the Decade was held at the Embassy of Bangladesh featuring speeches by the President of the Reading Association and the United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education. A round table was held on literacy and gender and an exhibition on literacy was opened. A media campaign was begun involving the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) series entitled "Children of the Code".

III. Activities of United Nations organizations and other international literacy partners

37. In addition to these launch ceremonies and related activities, there have been a number of other efforts to build momentum around the Decade and to address literacy needs. Many of them feature partnerships involving United Nations organizations and other international organizations. To encourage these kinds of partnerships, the UNESCO Basic Education Division, as the UNESCO headquarters team coordinating the Decade, organized a United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group to share information on Decade activities being undertaken by involved organizations. The first meeting was held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in November 2002 where agency representatives discussed how they could contribute to the launch of the Decade and to the implementation of its strategies. On 6 and 7 April 2004, UNESCO hosted a second Inter-Agency Working Group session under the title "The UNLD Consultative Meeting", again at its headquarters. This

second session offered an opportunity for United Nations organizations and other interested partners to report on the activities they had undertaken since the launch of the initiative.

38. One result of this collaboration was the creation of a special information kit entitled "Literacy as Freedom" explaining the various roles and interests of the United Nations organizations in respect of literacy, with a special emphasis on their planned contributions to the Decade. The kit included information on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Bank. As noted earlier, there was an inter-agency exhibition as part of the official launch in New York.

39. It is to be noted that the Decade partners selected the theme "Literacy and gender" for the first biennium of the Decade in recognition of the serious gender disparities regarding literacy, especially as these relate to women and girls. In addition, of course, this choice of thematic emphasis was made in light of the imminence of the 2005 EFA and Millennium Development Goals target relating to the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education.

A. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

40. UNICEF has considerable interest in the goals of the Decade.[20] This specialized agency provides assistance for school-based programmes on mother-tongue literacy and life skills. It sustains non-formal education for young people, usually with a focus on adolescent health issues and HIV/AIDS. Women's literacy is a priority for UNICEF and its programmes for them are linked to early childcare practices, microfinance and agriculture, along with other income-generating activities. UNICEF is supporting capacity development for literacy trainers and the strengthening of literacy assessment.

41. UNICEF is implementing approximately 50 literacy and literacy-related projects, demonstrating its support for literacy programmes and activities as the Decade begins. The following are representative examples. The agency is supporting projects in Kazakhstan and Bolivia in which women's literacy and early childcare programmes are integrated. In Kosovo, UNICEF is working with Turkish, Bosnian and Ashkaelia minority groups, providing literacy to 2,300 women and girls. Literacy and learning programmes for young children and adolescents are being supported in Uganda, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Somalia, the Sudan, Cambodia and Lesotho. Literacy is linked to life skills and other programmes in Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Myanmar, Yemen, Swaziland and Malawi. Linkages of literacy for women to life skills, vocational and management training and income-generating activities are features of programmes in Yemen, Uganda, Pakistan and Burkina Faso. Back-to-school campaigns are being supported in Afghanistan, Angola and Liberia, countries facing humanitarian crises or conflict situations. A strong and pervasive feature of UNICEF work in the period 2002-2004 has been the focus on the theme of "Literacy, girls and women".

B. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

42. An EFA Flagship Programme of great relevance to the Decade is the Education for Rural People (ERP) initiative being jointly led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNESCO. ERP has a gender dimension that fits the priority being given to the literacy of women and girls in the first two years of the Decade.

43. ERP made significant strides during 2003, including a global study undertaken by FAO and UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) on "Education for rural development: towards new policy responses". The study's goal is to build awareness regarding the importance of education for rural people in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The study found that this could be best achieved by increasing rural people's access to quality basic education and by increasing national capacity to implement basic education plans that address the learning needs of rural populations. The study is presented in the first of a new series of publications on Education for Rural People launched as part of the collaboration of UNESCO/IIEP with FAO. A web page was produced for the ERP initiative and can be found at http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/.

44. In addition to these activities, there has been an ERP pilot project that was started in Kosovo to develop a national strategy to address the learning needs of rural people there. Similar efforts have been undertaken in Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. A preliminary project formulation mission has been undertaken in Mozambique. Since 2002, more than a hundred academic, public or civil society organizations have become ERP flagship members and are organizing national events under the Education for Rural People banner. A national event organized by ERP partners was held in Venezuela in May 2004. In 2003, the European Commission approved a joint project presented by the Italian non-governmental organization Associazione di Cooperazione Rurale in Africa e America Latina (ACRA) in collaboration with FAO and UNESCO. The project is being carried out, in collaboration with six European non-governmental organizations, to provide capacity-building of civil society organizations and to increase public awareness of the importance of ERP in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France and Italy as well as Senegal, Chad, the United Republic of Tanzania, Chile and Bolivia.

C. World Food Programme (WFP)

45. The World Food Programme (WFP)[21] supports the Decade through programmes contributing to improving the literacy situation in many poor countries. Again, special attention is given to women and adolescent girls. WFP is strongly committed to education and literacy, as demonstrated through its broad framework, strategy and policy priorities that include both Education for All and commitments to women.

46. The WFP programme goal for 2004-2007 is to contribute to meeting the Millennium Development Goals through food-assisted interventions targeted at populations facing poverty and hunger. WFP operations focus on five strategic priorities. One of them is aimed at directly addressing the issue of equitable access to education and continuing education for adults. In addition, the School Feeding

Programme, which supports EFA, fed 12.3 million children in 2000 and 16 million in 2003, and it expects to feed 32 million by 2005 and 50 million by 2007. WFP contributes to adult literacy through its food-for-training activities. Literacy and numeracy training are considered part of an overall package, along with life skills, for addressing the practical and strategic needs of women and adolescent girls.

D. World Bank

47. The World Bank[22] reports an active role in adult education in both literacy and non-formal learning. For the World Bank, poverty reduction means more than raising incomes: it also means investing in improving health, building sustainable agriculture, forging gender equity, ensuring access to quality education, preserving natural resources and empowering local communities to play a larger role in social governance. The World Bank states that for adult education to contribute to poverty reduction, it must be closely linked to those different fields where poverty is rooted. The World Bank reports that it has been trying to position itself at this intersection for several years in order to assist adult educators in effecting the new linkages and to persuade counterparts in other sectors of the critical importance of adult learning strategies within their own fields of operation.

E. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

48. UNIFEM, another United Nations partner organization, reports that it has launched a publication entitled *Progress of the World's Women: Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals* (New York, UNIFEM, 2002). The publication tracks, among others indicators, female youth literacy rates and secondary school enrolment ratios using figures from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics.[23]

F. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

49. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)[24] has a mandate and programme priorities anchored in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development[25] held in Cairo in 1994. The Programme of Action devoted an entire chapter to education (chap. XI) and focused on the following objectives, each with a set of recommended actions: (a) to achieve universal access to quality education, in particular to primary and technical education and job training; (b) to combat illiteracy (the eradication of which is one of the prerequisites of human development) and to eliminate gender disparities in educational opportunities and support; (c) to promote non-formal education for young people; and (d) to introduce and improve the content of the curriculum so as to promote greater responsibility towards, and awareness of, the interrelationships between population and sustainable development; health issues (including reproductive health) and gender equity (para. 11.5). The Programme of Action also recognized that eradication of illiteracy is one of the prerequisites for human development (para. 11.6).

G. International Labour Organization (ILO)

50. The International Labour Organization (ILO)[26] has joined the international community in promoting EFA. It does so within the context of the Decent Work Agenda. This concerns not only child labour but also ILO efforts towards developing vocational and skills training, promoting the status of teachers, and upholding the rights of teachers' organizations. ILO addresses literacy issues in several different ways. For example, the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has clearly demonstrated that achieving the availability of free quality education is one of the most important means of keeping children out of the workforce and of breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and child labour over the long run. For ILO, the progressive elimination of child labour and the international community's efforts to achieve EFA, especially universal primary education by 2015, are inextricably linked. ILO maintains that the prevention and elimination of child labour should be an objective for educational policy worldwide, with free, compulsory education up to the minimum age for entering employment, as defined by the ILO Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (Convention No. 38) (1973).

H. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

51. UNESCO is fulfilling its role as the international coordinator of the Decade in a variety of ways, including the already noted convening of two inter-agency meetings to share information and plan strategies, as well as the coordination of the Decade regional launch events. UNESCO has also worked, through its regional and cluster offices and with national commissions for UNESCO, to encourage the promotion of the Decade and to assist member States in holding their own Decade launch activities.

52. UNESCO is also working on a number of projects in concert with other partners. For example, UNESCO, in cooperation with Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT), is working on a special project entitled "Literacy and Non-Formal Education Development in Afghanistan" (LAND-AFGHAN). Progress was made on this project during 2003 despite security concerns, a lack of basic information on literacy in the country, and a weakened Afghan infrastructure. A national survey of learners' needs was carried out across 400 literacy centres in the 32 provinces of the country. Based on the survey, the national curriculum was developed. According to the developed curriculum, national primers, a teachers' guide and 30 supplementary materials are being developed. UNESCO handbooks and tools have been also adapted and translated into two Afghan national languages.

53. A partnership has been established to promote an initiative to develop "Information-literate Societies". An initial meeting was held in Prague from 20 to 23 September 2003, organized jointly by the United States National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) and the National Forum on Information Literacy (NIFL). UNESCO provided financial support from the special United States Contribution to UNESCO for 2003, and participated actively in the meeting. The objectives were to develop a clearer and more comprehensive vision of the role of information literacy; to develop a working definition of the field; and to make

preliminary recommendations for a global congress on information literacy. Forty experts from 23 countries attended the meeting.

54. The jury for the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes met in Paris from 19 to 23 May 2003. Thirty projects from around the world were nominated for the four awards and the presentation of the prizes took place on International Literacy Day (8 September 2003) prior to the opening of CONFINTEA+6 in Bangkok. The jury had decided to adopt "Literacy and gender" as the theme for the 2003 and 2004 prizes, given that this was the theme for the Decade during this biennium.

55. The jury selected the following projects for recognition. The International Reading Association Literacy Award was presented to the Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Bangladesh. The Noma Literacy Prize went to the Panuka Trust, Zambia. The King Sejong Literacy Prizes were awarded to the Tembaletu Community Education Centre, South Africa, and the International Reflect Circle (CIRAC). There were four honourable mentions as well: the Fundación Alfabetizadora LAUBACH (Colombia), for the International Reading Association Award; the Ribat Al Fath Association for Sustainable Development (Morocco) for the Noma Prize; and the Youth and Adult Literacy and Education Chair, Latin American and Caribbean Pedagogic Institute, Cuba, and the National Guard Directorate of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Saudi Arabia, for the King Sejong Literacy Prizes.

56. The jury met from 10 to 14 May 2004 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris to award the International Reading Association Literacy Award and the King Sejong Literacy Prizes for the year 2004. Again, "Literacy and gender" was the theme selected. There were 28 candidates nominated by Governments for the prizes. The jury unanimously decided on the following recipients. The International Reading Association Literacy Award was presented to the Edikasyon pu travayer organization, which had been nominated by the Government of Mauritius. The two King Sejong Literacy Prizes were awarded to Alfabetização Solidária (AlfaSol) (Solidarity in Literacy), which had been nominated by the Government of Brazil, and the Steering Group of Literacy Education in Qinghai Province, which had been nominated by the Government of China.

57. One major issue is the lack of reliable data on the state of literacy in the developing world. The current weaknesses in the methods used to gather literacy data arise from the fact that those data are usually based on general household or population census data reliant upon self-assessments or on educational proxies as measures of literacy attainment. There is no question that good data are needed in order to understand the current literacy and adult learning situations in developing countries, and to design appropriate interventions in training and policy-making. There is also a need to develop methods for assessing literacy and numeracy skills directly, and to measure participation in formal and non-formal adult education and training in developing countries.

58. To that end, in 2003, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics launched the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP) in cooperation with a number of stakeholders including UNESCO headquarters, the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE), the World Bank, various international agencies and technical experts in literacy assessment. Collaboration with local and regional organizations is also expected. LAMP is testing a methodology to measure literacy skills directly in order to provide participating countries with data of high quality. It will use five levels of

literacy proficiency and will be compatible with the pioneering work done on the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) in industrialized countries.

59. UNESCO, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and UIE joined forces to organize an "Expert Meeting on Literacy" in Paris from 10 to 12 June 2003. The focus of the meeting was a definition and expanded notion of literacy and a discussion of the proposed LAMP initiative. The meeting also considered the UNESCO Education Sector's position paper on the plural notion of "literacies".

60. Similarly, UNESCO efforts are also being directed at the need for more complete information on non-formal education, especially the monitoring of progress towards EFA targets. UNESCO has begun its Monitoring and Evaluation of Non-formal Education Programme. A prototype non-formal education monitoring methodology is being field-tested in the United Republic of Tanzania, Cambodia and India where Non-Formal Education Management Information Systems (NFE-MIS) are being set up and operationalized.

61. CONFINTEA+6 was a mid-term review of developments in the field of adult education since 1997, when the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) had been held in Hamburg, Germany. The next international conference will be held in 2009. UIE organized this 90-nation conference in Bangkok from 8 to 11 September 2003. The event was opened on International Literacy Day just after the launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade in the Asia-Pacific region.

IV. Work in progress: current projects addressing Literacy Decade objectives

62. As a companion to the present report, UNESCO is publishing a public document rich in details on the kinds of work currently being done to achieve Decade objectives in both the developing and the developed world. This publication is part of the UNESCO awareness-raising campaign for the Decade. In the fuller report, there are over 100 projects cited as examples of "work in progress". They include projects addressing the literacy needs of women and girls, and efforts to reach those excluded from the mainstream such as ethnic and linguistic minorities. There are examples of new programmes designed to create literate environments.

63. To provide an idea of what UNESCO has found in its research and the range of projects discussed in the fuller report, in terms of innovative approaches, strategies, methodologies and models being used to provide basic literacy, to enhance literacy skills or to create conditions favourable to learners and learning, the following examples are given directly below. They exemplify many of the strategies and actions outlined in the International Plan of Action for the Decade and include:

(a) Projects, such as the Programa Integrar of the Brazilian Metalworkers' Union, that integrate training for work with general education;[27]

(b) Programmes that link adult basic education with lifelong learning;[28]

(c) Action-oriented programmes where adult educators work under the same conditions as learners. Two examples are the Adult Education for Alternative Farming Methods and Health-care Programme in Argentina involving agricultural workers[29] and Frontier College in Canada which works with inner-city youth,

prisoners and migrant farm workers. In both cases, the objective is to build mutual trust and respect between educators and learners so as to facilitate learning;

(d) Peer education programmes such as the "My Future is My Choice" Life Skill Programme in Namibia, where young people teach their peers about health-related issues, and the Adolescent Peer Education Programme in Belize which is directed towards healthy lifestyles, with a focus on combating HIV/AIDS;

(e) Teacher-training projects, such as one identified in Albania, that use an individual learning strategy approach that is fully adapted to a learner's learning style. Careful attention is given to where the learning takes place and to other environmental factors that affect learning.[30] Another example is the Individual Interest Promotion Programmes being run in continuing education centres in Kerala, India;[31]

(f) A combination of learning and interactive networking involving female participants and mentors called "net-learning" which encourages experimental learning methods and approaches;[32]

(g) A productive community-based model in Bolivia called the Alternative Education Programme for Young and Adult Persons of the Centro de Educación Técnica Humanística Agropecuaria (CETHA)-Emborozú, which uses an integrative curriculum;[33]

(h) A strategy of reorienting rural schools as community learning centres which is used, for example, in China where the role of rural schools is expanded to encompass their serving as community learning centres;[34]

(i) Adult learners' weeks or learning festivals[35] which are used as an awareness-raising strategy to reach many in a short period of time.

64. In addition, a number of other examples can be found in the (most recent) *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4*. It provides a full chapter on "Lessons from good practice" (chap. 4) related to closing the gender gap and promoting equality in education.[36] Several of those lessons touch on literacy. Overall, the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* focus is on issues such as public policy-making that is appropriate for the needs of girls and women and for their learning objectives: creating an enabling environment; investing in redistribution by targeting resources to needed areas; and the introduction of education reforms. While these measures are centred on the issues of gender disparities and gender equality as they affect women and girls, they also apply to other people who are "literacy-disadvantaged".

65. The *EFA Global Monitoring Report* also explains how historical circumstances can provide lessons for the future. One example cited concerns the "Kerala model" drawn from the Indian State of the same name. The impact of a matrilineal culture and the efforts of an early modernizing State complemented one another in the creation of unprecedented social and educational developments for women during the early twentieth century.[37]

66. The *EFA Global Monitoring Report* then turns to examples of practices that reduce the costs of girls' education and reduce child labour. These measures include: scholarships for girls, income support schemes, school feeding programmes, addressing the needs of pregnant girls, preventing HIV/AIDS, combating gender-based violence, working with teachers, curriculum reforms, empowering women teachers, measures for out-of-school girls, and expanding early childhood care.

V. Conclusions

67. **The United Nations Literacy Decade faces many challenges, especially at the national level and particularly in those countries where the levels of illiteracy are highest. There is also a growing concern that the issue of literacy is not sufficiently high in the agendas of both the developed and developing countries of the world to generate the kind of political and economic support required to address global illiteracy challenges.**

68. **The achievement of the goals of the United Nations Literacy Decade will be possible only through the collective efforts of all the stakeholders, including United Nations organizations, bilateral and multilateral agencies, every State Member of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector. The challenge, therefore, is to expand and enhance partnerships involving these actors, to mobilize public awareness, to share information on good practices, to leverage resources, to coordinate activities, to monitor progress and to report on the achievement of the United Nations Literacy Decade goals.**

69. **The success of the United Nations Literacy Decade will depend heavily on the extent to which literacy policy makers and practitioners at the national level (Governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and communities) have the resources and the scope they require to be able to play a substantial role in addressing the literacy challenge. Success will come not from the top but from people working at the grass-roots level in their communities as well as through the combined efforts of practitioners and learners.**

70. **During the first stage of the United Nations Literacy Decade, attention clearly has been focused on its launch at international, regional and national levels. This activity has involved sizeable human and financial investments throughout 2003 and in early 2004. It is as yet too soon to tell how much the Decade call to action has elicited increased resources and heightened levels of activity, although this report contains some promising indications that the various literacy partners are gearing themselves up for greater efforts.**

71. **The information contained in this report, especially regarding the many new approaches to the provision of literacy skills, provides a foundation for some hope. It testifies to the fact that we are on the right path. However, real diligence, strength of commitment, relentless effort and appropriate resources are required if the United Nations is to meet its objectives for 2012 and if the EFA goals are to be met by 2015.**

72. **While the positive actions reported here are a basis for some optimism, they must be viewed through the prism of realism. The only conclusion that can be drawn in mid-2004 is that, on current trends, the world is unlikely to meet the literacy challenges that lay before it by 2012 (the end of the Decade) or by 2015 (the target date for the achievement of the EFA goals). However, this is not a prediction: everything depends on the literacy-related actions that are taken in the period ahead and their scope, effectiveness and impact.**

VI. Recommendations

73. **Member States, especially those countries where levels of illiteracy are high and/or illiterate populations are large, should mobilize the political will and financial resources required to meet the literacy challenges that they face. The case must be made for the importance of investments in literacy and basic education not only for children but also for youth and adults. We know from research findings that literate parents raise literate children. It is vital to galvanize the necessary leadership and resources if a 50 per cent improvement in adult literacy levels is to be secured by 2015.**

74. **The international community, including United Nations organizations and bilateral and multilateral development agencies, is hereby encouraged to collectively support the efforts of those countries with particular needs by providing the financial and technical assistance required to improve their literacy policies and programmes. Such enhanced support is necessary if the United Nations Literacy Decade goals are to be achieved.**

75. **The international community should also address the need for an effective and substantive integration of United Nations Literacy Decade efforts with the EFA and Millennium Development Goals processes and for an enhanced linkage between the Decade and other global initiatives such as the UNICEF-led United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), the EFA Flagship Programme on Education for Rural People (ERP) and the forthcoming United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014. An integrated approach is essential. For the United Nations Literacy Decade to succeed, there must be a clear recognition of the extent to which a significant lack of literacy skills limits the potential for societies to deal with issues such as poverty, gender discrimination, poor health, HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, social exclusion and powerlessness.**

76. **Civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, as important development partners in respect of the United Nations Literacy Decade, should mobilize their constituencies to enhance the implementation of the Decade's International Plan of Action at the national, subregional, regional and international levels.**

77. **As the lead coordinating agency at the international level, UNESCO, in collaboration with its partners, should help the United Nations to document and report on the progress that Member States make towards the achievement of the goals established for the Decade and to encourage sustained commitment over the duration of the initiative to 2012. The progress reports should be submitted to the General Assembly biennially, beginning in 2005. Effective reporting will be possible only if clear goals are established for the short, medium and long term at the national level with respect to the strategies, expected outcomes and areas of activity of the International Plan of Action.**

78. UNESCO, along with all the stakeholders involved in the United Nations Literacy Decade, should enhance the ongoing awareness-raising efforts designed to increase the knowledge, understanding and interest of the general public and decision makers with regard to the Decade and its objectives. UNESCO shall consult widely on how information about the Decade, especially progress in literacy achievements, monitoring and partnerships, can best be shared. Of particular importance is the need to share information about good and appropriate practices.

Notes

[1] The figure reported is 861,966,000 (UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4: Gender and Education for All: The Leap to Equality* (Paris, 2004), statistical annex, p. 310, table 2, and narrative text, p. 86).

[2] Ibid. The figure reported is 104,189,000 (p. 335, table 5).

[3] United Nations press release entitled "Secretary-General's remarks to mark the launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade", New York, 13 February 2003.

[4] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000), para. 7.

[5] See report of the Secretary-General entitled, "United Nations Literacy Decade: education for all; International Plan of Action: implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/116" (A/57/218 and Corr. 1), para. 3.

[6] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[7] Statistics Canada and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society* (Ottawa and Paris, 1997), p. 29.

[8] For a general discussion of the relationship between parental skills and those of their children, see R. Haveman and B. Wolfe, *Succeeding Generations and the Effects of Investment in Children* (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1994).

[9] *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4* ..., table 2.21.

[10] Ibid., p. 86.

[11] Ibid., statistical annex, table 2.

[12] UNESCO, *Literacy: A UNESCO Perspective* (Paris, 2003), p. 1.

[13] Daniel Boothby, *Literacy Skills, Occupational Assignment and the Returns to Over- and Under-Education* (Ottawa, Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, January 2002).

[14] Lars Osberg, *Schooling, Literacy and Individual Earnings* (Ottawa, Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, June 2000); and David A. Green and W. Craig Riddell, *Literacy, Numeracy and Labour Market Outcomes in Canada* (Ottawa, Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, January 2001).

[15] OECD and Statistics Canada, *Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society* (Paris and Ottawa, 1997), p. 107.

[16] United Nations press release entitled "Secretary-General's remarks to mark the launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade", New York, 13 February 2003; and UNESCO, "Message by the Director-General of UNESCO to Mark the Launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012)", 13 February 2003, para. 3.

[17] United Nations Literacy Decade, UNESCO web site: http://www.unesco.org. Path: Education (accessed 10 September 2004).

[18] Ministry resolution No. 271-2003-ED (20 February 2003).

[19] Information sent by the Paraguayan Ministry of Education (Dirección General de Educación Permanente), 19 March 2004.

[20] "Literacy and development: a focus on gender in the framework of UNLD", presentation by Cooper Dawson, Senior Adviser, UNICEF/New York, UNLD Consultative Meeting, UNESCO, Paris, 6 May 2004.

[21] This information is taken from a presentation made by WFP at a consultative meeting on the United Nations Literacy Decade organized by UNESCO in Paris from 6 to 8 April 2004.

[22] Information was provided by World Bank at the consultative meeting held in Paris (6-8 April 2004).

[23] Information provided by UNIFEM to UNESCO in March 2004.

[24] This information was provided by Delia Barcelona, Senior Technical Officer, Technical Support Division, UNFPA, New York.

[25] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[26] Facts on education's role in combating child labour, ILO.

[27] C. M. Bueno Fischer and J. Hannah, "(Re)constructing citizenship, 2002", available from www.integrarmetalrs.org.br (accessed 10 September 2004).

[28] M. Singh, ed., *Institutionalising Lifelong Learning: Creating Conducive Environments for Adult Learning in the Asian Context* (Hamburg, Germany, UIE, 2002); C. Medel-Añonuevo, ed., *Integrating Lifelong Learning Perspectives* (Hamburg, Germany, UIE, 2002).

[29] R. Aramendy, "Learning to fly", *Adult Education and Development (Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association)*, No. 53, pp. 265-285.

[30] V. Ristani, "The challenges of teacher training in Albania", in *Lifelong Learning Discourses in Europe*, Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo, ed. (Hamburg, Germany, UNESCO Institute for Education, 2003), pp. 159-160.

[31] Kerala State Literacy Mission, "Beyond letters" project.

[32] See work by Janneke Jellema, Project Manager, Socio Economic Institute (SEIN), Limburg University, Belgium.

[33] Alternative Education Programme for Young and Adult Persons of CETHA-Emborozú, Bolivia, CETHA Emborozú, Centro Experimental y Generador, "Educación y Vida: De la Práctica a la Teoría: Sistematización de la experiencia educativa de 1993 a 1999" (La Paz, 1999).

[34] Zh Tiedao, "Increasing learning opportunities in rural China: school community linkages and farmers' access to further learning", in *Institutionalising Lifelong Learning: Creating Conducive Environments for Adult Learning in the Asian Context*, M. Singh, ed. (Hamburg, Germany, UNESCO Institute for Education, 2002), pp. 179-181.

[35] B. Bochynek, "Mobilising for learning at the crossroads of international education policy frameworks: the role of adult learners weeks and lifelong learning festivals", in *Lifelong Learning Discourses in Europe*, Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo, ed. (Hamburg, Germany, UNESCO Institute for Education, 2003) pp. 169-177.

[36] *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4* ..., chap. 4, pp. 155-189.

[37] Ibid., p. 156.

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Sport for peace and development: International Year of Sport and Physical Education

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/5 on 3 November 2003, in which the Assembly proclaimed the year 2005 the International Year of Sport and Physical Education. Guidance and support for activities in connection with the year will come from the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, which has been requested by the Secretary-General to handle sport-related issues in cooperation with the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace.

The present report describes current and planned activities, initiatives and networking at the international, national and local levels and provides examples of the potential of sport-related projects and programmes for the promotion of health, education, development and peace. It also provides examples of partnership initiatives among governmental organizations, as well as with vibrant civil society organizations with a sport focus.

The report also describes the implementation of other points of resolution 58/5, including the status of the process of drafting an international convention against doping in sport under the aegis of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 58/5 of 3 November 2003, the General Assembly encouraged Governments, international sports bodies and sport-related organizations to elaborate and implement partnership initiatives and development projects compatible with the education provided at all levels of schooling to help achieve the goals contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;[1] encouraged the United Nations to develop strategic partnerships with the range of stakeholders involved in sport, including sports organizations, sports associations and the private sector, to assist in the implementation of sport for development programmes; stressed the need for all parties to cooperate closely with international sports bodies to elaborate a "code of good practice"; invited Governments to accelerate the elaboration of an international anti-doping convention in all sports activities; and proclaimed 2005 the International Year of Sport and Physical Education.

2. Pursuant to resolution 58/5, the Secretary-General urged Governments to give serious consideration to how sport could be more systematically included in plans to improve people's lives, especially those of children living in poverty, disease or conflict.

3. A small office to assist with the preparation for the International Year was established in Geneva in April 2004 under the leadership of Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace. The office is working closely with the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships in New York, which is providing guidance and support for the Year, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). As lead agency for the Year, UNESCO is helping to focus advocacy and awareness-raising on strengthening physical education and sport in education systems globally in compliance with its International Charter of Physical Education and Sport of UNESCO.[2] As activities for the Year get under way, additional support is expected from the United Nations Development Programme and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat.

II. Background

4. In October 2003, the Secretary-General published the report of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, entitled *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. In many aspects the report constituted the basis for General Assembly resolution 58/5 and represents a synthesis of the long-standing relationship between the world of sport and the United Nations system.

5. Sport was first formally included in activities of the United Nations system at the first international conference of ministers in charge of sport and physical education, organized by UNESCO in Paris in 1976. This led to the establishment of an Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport, as well as to the adoption of the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport in 1978.

6. Since that time many entities of the United Nations system have engaged in a relationship with sports organizations, such as the International Olympic Committee and other members of the Olympic Movement, sports federations, sport clubs and sport-related non-governmental organizations. In 2001, the Secretary-General

nominated Adolf Ogi, former President of the Swiss Confederation, to serve as his Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace. The objective of the post is twofold: (a) to make the practice of sport more systematic; and (b) to motivate sports organizations to become more interested and involved in United Nations activities through partnerships.

7. The 2003 report recognized that sport presents a natural partnership for the Organization. By its very nature sport is about participation, inclusion and citizenship. It brings individuals and communities together, highlighting commonalities and bridging cultural and ethnic divides. Sport provides a forum to learn skills such as discipline, confidence and leadership and it teaches core principles such as tolerance, cooperation and respect. Sport teaches the value of effort and how to manage victory, as well as defeat.

8. When the positive aspects of sport are emphasized, sport becomes a powerful vehicle through which the United Nations can work towards achieving its goals. The practice of sport is vital to the holistic development of young people, fostering their physical and emotional health and building valuable social connections. It offers opportunities for play and self-expression, beneficial especially for those young people with few other opportunities in their lives. Sport also provides healthy alternatives to harmful actions, such as drug abuse and crime. Within schools, physical education is an essential component of quality education. Physical education programmes promote physical activity and studies have shown that such programmes can improve academic performance.

9. In its 2003 report, the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace found that well-designed, sport-based initiatives were practical and cost-effective tools to achieve objectives in development and peace. Sport can cut across barriers that divide societies, making it a powerful tool to support conflict prevention and peace-building efforts, both symbolically at the global level and practically within communities. When applied effectively, sport programmes promote social integration and foster tolerance, helping to reduce tension and generate dialogue. The convening power of sport makes it additionally compelling as a tool for advocacy and communication.

10. The objectives of the United Nations system for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education in 2005 can be summarized as follows:

(a) To broaden the general perception of "sport" beyond "elite sport" to include the notion of "sport for all";

(b) To underline the need for physical education as part of a balanced education and leading towards the achievement of Education for All in education systems in particular, as advocated by the World Education Forum, held in Dakar from 26 to 28 April 2000;[3]

(c) To create interest in human development issues in the world of sport (the sports industry, sport federations, athletes and the sports media) and to facilitate partnerships;

(d) To encourage initiatives where sport can assist in creating a platform for intercultural, post-conflict, peace-building dialogue;

(e) To disseminate information about the value of sport and physical education for development and peace in order to integrate sport into development strategies, programmes and activities.

III. Institutional arrangements

11. As the lead agency for sport-related activities within the United Nations, UNESCO has a key role to play in convincing Governments to advance the cause of sport and to improve awareness of the benefits of sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace. In that regard, a recent letter sent by the Director-General of UNESCO to Member States aims to draw national Governments and physical education stakeholders to mobilize efforts for a successful International Year in 2005. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, as co-chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, has collected a wide range of examples of the implementation of sport-based projects for development and peace by the United Nations system, as well as by non-governmental organizations and other partners.

12. Under the joint leadership of the Director-General of UNESCO and Mr. Ogi, an inter-agency meeting on sport was convened in Geneva in July 2004 to discuss issues of coordination, cooperation and consistency in order to maximize the impact of celebrations and avoid duplication by the various programmes, projects and activities planned by the United Nations system for the International Year in 2005. The meeting resulted in a list of complementary activities and projects to be implemented on a voluntary basis by the various concerned entities of the United Nations system in accordance with their respective mandates. A further list of United Nations and other sport-based development projects is being constantly updated in a database financially supported by the Government of Switzerland.

IV. International activities and initiatives

13. United Nations entities can contribute to the International Year of Sport and Physical Education on one or more of three different levels: policy advice and advocacy; creation of projects and activities; and programme enhancement. This allows for a broad base of support that goes beyond short-term activities to foster a longer-term impact, a good example of which is the recently adopted National Youth Strategy for Albania, led by the Government and supported by the United Nations Country Team in Albania. In May 2004 the country team held a three-day workshop on sports as a means to promote development as part of the common programme with the Government of Albania for implementing the Strategy, with sports being viewed as a means to achieve social unity and to foster real-life values.

14. A number of projects and initiatives planned for the Year will focus on communications and advocacy, while several others will tap the potential of sport to enhance existing programmes, especially children- and youth-oriented programmes. To date, many entities of the United Nations system have integrated sport into both communications and programmatic aspects of their work.

15. The International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environmental Programme, UNESCO and the

United Nations Children's Fund have identified activities for the Year. Additionally, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS is planning to use major sports events as a means of raising awareness and fighting the stigma associated with the AIDS epidemic. They are the most recent body of the United Nations system to sign a memorandum of understanding with the International Olympic Committee (in June 2004).

16. A selection of international events planned to further awareness of the value of sport to promote education, health, development and peace include:

(a) The Fourth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education, and Sport, to be organized by UNESCO in Athens from 6 to 8 December 2004, which will be an initial opportunity to discuss, at the government level, the various development-related themes of sport in relation to the International Year in 2005;

(b) An international conference on sport and health, to be held in Tunis in January 2005;

(c) An international conference on sport and health, to be held in Moscow in 2004;

(d) An international summit on sport and the environment, to be held during the World Exposition in Aichi, Japan, in July 2005;

(e) The second international conference on sport and development, which will close the International Year in Magglingen, Switzerland, from 4 to 6 December 2005.

17. On the occasion of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships and the United Nations Children's Fund co-hosted a ministerial round table entitled "Common ground: sport as an innovative tool for development and peace", with 23 participants, including ambassadors, representatives of sports federations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations and former Olympic athletes.

18. A round table entitled "Harnessing the power of sport for development and peace" was organized by the international sports non-governmental organization Right to Play in Athens in August 2004 to highlight the humanitarian potential of sport and to demonstrate the breadth of its applicability through examples from a diverse group of countries. Two panel discussions provided specific understanding of sport as a potential tool for peace and sport as a contributor in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The round table brought together government representatives, United Nations leaders, the Olympic family, elite athletes, representatives of international sports federations and other members of the world of sport to ensure that sport becomes a recognized force in the global partnership for development.

V. Public information strategy

19. A public information strategy is being formulated for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education in 2005 through collaboration among the various public information units of participating entities of the United Nations system and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and in cooperation with various Governments and non-governmental organizations. An official logo for the

Year has already been approved by the Publications Board at Headquarters and is beginning to be disseminated to national committees as well as sports organizations such as the International Olympic Committee, which has agreed to make use of the logo. A slogan to complement the logo is also being worked on.

20. The use of sport and physical education as a means to promote education, health, development and peace must be viewed in relation to other United Nations initiatives and events. The year 2005 will also be the United Nations International Year of Microcredit and the office for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education intends to work closely with organizers of the International Year of Microcredit, as well as other international years and anniversaries, in order to develop synergies, where appropriate, to reduce costs and to maximize impact.

VI. Public awareness activities

21. The opportunity to participate in and enjoy sport and play is a human right to be promoted and supported. Sport and play are therefore not only a means, but also an end.

22. Many United Nations organizations work successfully with the world of sport in the area of communications and awareness-raising about key issues through global and local efforts. There are various ways to use sport as a vehicle to communicate a message, including working with athletes as ambassadors or spokespersons, dedication of sports events to development issues, involvement of the media and collaboration between all partners involved in sports events, including the private sector. These elements can be used individually or together as part of a coherent communications framework.

23. The convening power of sport makes it a useful tool to bring together communities for direct public initiatives and social mobilization. It allows for broad delivery of messages and programmes to a wide range of people at the local and national levels, drawing diverse groups together in a positive and supportive environment. Whether as an additional element to an existing sports event or as a sports festival specifically organized to further mobilization efforts, sport platforms provide a practical and cost-effective medium for sharing critical information with hard-to-reach groups.

24. In 2005, in the framework of the International Year, participating organizations of the United Nations system intend to continue their outreach activities together with sports organizations. Some events will be dedicated to the celebration of the International Year and, when possible, existing events, campaigns or communication strategies will adopt the imagery of the Year and further support the achievement of development- and peace-related goals.

VII. Related publications

25. Several important United Nations journals and other development-related publications that provide information on international cooperation and peace-building issues will be used for the promotion of the International Year of Sport and Physical Education in 2005.

26. The United Nations Environment Programme's youth magazine, *TUNZA*, is already regularly informing its readers about the value of sport as a way to understand the importance of preserving the environment. It has been proposed that an issue of the United Nations Development Programme magazine *Choices* be devoted to the International Year and national development agencies will be involved in an effort to further the theme of the Year in their own publications. Additionally, as part of the contribution of the International Labour Organization to the Year, a book on the socio-economic aspects of sport is expected to be published by mid-2005. A number of other publications will be targeted in both the North and the South and an opinion piece by Mr. Ogi will be submitted to one or more major international publications to highlight the importance of the Year.

VIII. Funding considerations

27. The number of Governments supporting sport-related development and peace initiatives is growing. However, the private sector, in particular sports industry manufacturers and sports organizations such as international sports federations, remain only marginally involved in funding development and peace initiatives. Fund-raising appeals are therefore planned to address all stakeholders, such as Governments, non-governmental organizations and private foundations.

28. A United Nations stamp has been designed for the International Year of Sport and Physical Education in 2005 in conjunction with the International Olympic Committee and the Swiss postal services. The proceeds from the sale of the stamp could be contributed to the fund for the Year. Other means of fund-raising are also being explored.

IX. Expected results

29. The International Year of Sport and Physical Education in 2005 is intended to provide an opportunity to promote the value of sport as a serious partner for the achievement of development and peace goals. It is expected that the perception of "sport" by the general public, as well as at the government level, will be broadened to include the notion of "sport for all". This is a particular issue for developing countries where the promotion of elite sport and the achievement of results at international sports competitions are considered a way of promoting national unity and a country's value and competitiveness. The International Year is expected to demonstrate that a fraction of the resources allocated to elite sport can have a significant impact on the general health conditions and well being of a large portion of a nation's population.

30. It is expected that the International Year will illustrate the importance of sport for a balanced education. Though an essential component of quality education and an integral part of lifelong learning, physical education is steadily losing ground in formal education systems. The neglect of physical education reduces the quality of learning, with negative future effects on public health and on health budgets. Given that rates of physical activity tend to decrease from adolescence on, it is imperative that young people gain an appreciation of sport at school in order to ensure lifelong active and healthy living.

31. It is expected that the sport-related private sector (the sports industry) and international sports federations will grow more interested in human development and peace-building issues. This can be achieved through the development of partnerships with the United Nations system and an increased sharing of information at all levels.

32. Initiatives will be encouraged to use sport as a means of promoting intercultural, post-conflict and peace-building dialogues. It is expected that such efforts will be evaluated and lessons will be learned and disseminated. To date, evidence of the validity of such initiatives remains anecdotal, since they are often considered non-essential and non-life-saving. The aim is to obtain solid evidence to make the case for sport-based initiatives promoting sustainable peace for their organization in a systematic and appropriate manner. Scientific research into sport-based initiatives should therefore be supported during the International Year and the results disseminated as widely as possible.

X. Implementation of other provisions of resolution 58/5

33. In its resolution 58/5, the General Assembly invited Governments to accelerate the elaboration of an international anti-doping convention in all sports activities, and requested UNESCO, in cooperation with other relevant international and regional organizations, to coordinate the elaboration of such a convention.

34. The matter was discussed at the UNESCO round table of ministers of physical education and sport, held in January 2003, which recommended that the preparation of the convention be coordinated by UNESCO, in close cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the Council of Europe, the International Olympic Committee, the World Anti-Doping Agency and the International Intergovernmental Consultative Group on Anti-Doping in Sport. A feature of the development of the convention is the critical involvement and cooperation of the World Anti-Doping Agency, the recognized lead non-government organization in the fight against doping.

35. The Director-General of UNESCO convened three ad hoc meetings of experts and two sessions of an intergovernmental meeting, resulting in a preliminary draft, which was sent out for comment to all Member States by the Director-General in mid-July 2004.

36. The Fourth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport, to be held in Athens from 6 to 8 December 2004, will consider inputs to the preliminary draft and will obtain political agreement on any pending issues.

XI. Conclusion

37. Given the variety of contributions to the International Year of Sport and Physical Education in 2005, a common framework should be developed to unite the United Nations system and its partners to further sport for education, health, development and peace in a coordinated manner. The overarching objective should be the systematic integration of sport into existing activities, programmes and projects wherever relevant.

38. Further steps include continuing to work along the lines of the present report and to develop further the strong links among organizations of the United Nations system and the world of sport, Governments, the private sector and civil society. It is important that initiatives implemented for in connection with the International Year aim for longer-term effects that will be felt beyond 2005. Specific actions will include: (a) confirming the dates for the launch of the International Year; (b) preparing a concept document and communications strategy in support of national committees; and (c) developing a calendar of events connected with the International Year.

Notes

1 See resolution 55/2.

2 See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Twentieth Session, Paris, 24 October-28 November 1978*, vol. 1: *Resolutions*.

3 Ibid., *Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000*, Paris, 2000.

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Situation of human rights in Myanmar

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is based upon the good offices efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, Razali Ismail, in attempting to facilitate national reconciliation and democratization in Myanmar, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/247 of 23 December 2003. The discussions that the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy have had separately with the Myanmar authorities during the reporting period focused on the need for the latter to make the seven-step road map for democratic transition, announced by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt on 30 August 2003, a credible vehicle for national reconciliation and democratization by ensuring that it was all-inclusive and transparent from the beginning. During his mission in March 2004, the Special Envoy explained the United Nations position to the Government, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy, as well as to representatives of other political parties and ethnic nationality groups. On 17 May, however, the National Convention was reconvened without the participation of the National League for Democracy and some ethnic nationality political parties. Moreover, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her deputy, U Tin Oo, who had been detained after the Depayin incident of 30 May 2003, remained under house arrest. Their status remains unchanged at the time of reporting.

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The Secretary-General is seriously concerned by the absence of an all-inclusive process of national reconciliation and democratization in Myanmar. Recalling the assurances given by the Government of Myanmar to his Special Envoy that the road map process would be all-inclusive, the Secretary-General urges Senior General Than Shwe and other senior leaders of the State Peace and Development Council to use the opportunity presented by the 9 July adjournment of the National Convention to lift, as a matter of priority, the remaining restrictions on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; to commence a substantive dialogue with her and her party immediately; to take the necessary steps to ensure that the National Convention process is all-inclusive and open; and to ensure that the views of the delegates, including those already articulated by the ethnic nationality ceasefire groups, are adequately taken into account. Those actions, if taken, would provide the basis of a credible forum for a tripartite dialogue among the Government, the National League for Democracy and ethnic nationalities.

In addition, the Secretary-General calls on the countries in the region, and especially the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to take a leading role in counselling the State Peace and Development Council to take the aforementioned steps. He also urges the Council to allow his Special Envoy to resume regular visits so that he can help to facilitate national reconciliation and democratization in the country. In that context, the Secretary-General notes with concern that repeated requests for his Special Envoy to be allowed to return to Myanmar (and similar requests made by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro), have, to date, been considered "not convenient" by the Myanmar authorities. Under the circumstances, there can be no escaping the conclusion that Myanmar has not cooperated to the maximum extent possible with the United Nations; consequently, the United Nations facilitation efforts have not been as effective as they could have been. The Secretary-General is nevertheless determined to continue providing his good offices, on the basis of successive General Assembly resolutions and in support of the people of Myanmar, who have hitherto been prevented from enjoying the same benefits of economic, social and political development as their counterparts in neighbouring countries.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant General Assembly resolution 58/247 of 23 December 2003, entitled "Situation of human rights in Myanmar", in paragraph 7 of which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide his good offices and to pursue discussions on the situation of human rights and the restoration of democracy with the Government and people of Myanmar, including all relevant parties to the national reconciliation process in Myanmar, and to report to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and to the Commission on Human Rights at its sixtieth session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

2. As indicated in his previous reports, the role entrusted to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly is specifically that of good offices, as opposed to the fact-finding mandate assigned by the Commission on Human Rights to the Special Rapporteur. In that context, the Assembly, in its resolution 58/247, welcomed the visits to Myanmar during the past year by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.

3. In implementation of resolution 58/247, the Special Envoy visited Myanmar from 1 to 4 March 2004. Prior to his visit, certain important developments had taken place, including the announcement by the Government that it would reconvene the National Convention, adjourned in 1996, as the first step in the seven-step road map; the resumption of peace talks between the Government and the rebel group, the Karen National Union (KNU), which has fought the central Government since 1948; and the convening by Thailand of an international meeting of "like-minded" countries to facilitate the implementation of the seven-step road map, a process known as the Bangkok Process. At that meeting, U Win Aung, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, promised those present that there were no plans to push Daw Aung San Suu Kyi or the National League for Democracy (NLD) aside. On 11 February 2004, media reports quoted the Minister as having stated that "there is no foundation for the exclusion of the National League for Democracy — it is still a legal political party" and that "Aung San Suu Kyi will be fully free, able to meet other members of her party and conduct normal political activities before the National Convention convenes". Against that backdrop, the primary objective of the Special Envoy's visit was to assess how the Government's efforts to implement its road map were progressing and to urge the Government to make the process as transparent and all-inclusive as possible.

II. Contents of the discussions

4. During his visit, the Special Envoy met with the Prime Minister, General Khin Nyunt, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Labour, Tin Win and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Khin Maung Win. On the NLD side, he met twice with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at her residence, once with Vice-Chairman Tin Oo, who was also under house arrest, and once with five other members of the NLD Central Executive Committee (CEC), who had been released. He also met with members of the National Unity Party and the United Nationalities Alliance, a group of eight ethnic nationality political parties. The Special Envoy stressed to all the parties that in order to be credible the road map process for a democratic transition in Myanmar should be all-inclusive, open and transparent.

5. Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt assured the Special Envoy that the Government would implement the road map in "good faith", noting that his three senior representatives had had monthly meetings with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi since December 2003. The Prime Minister also stated that he was working hard to include all the parties concerned in the National Convention, but said that he was not able to provide a date for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release. Nor was he able to offer a time frame for the road map. With regard to the peace talks with the KNU, the Prime Minister explained that talks were progressing well in general, although some difficulties had surfaced lately. The Special Envoy was unable to meet with Senior General Than Shwe during his mission. For her part, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi expressed her readiness to "turn a new page" and in that context to cooperate with the Government for the good of the people and to discuss with it the NLD position vis-à-vis the road map, including its participation in the National Convention. The Special Envoy subsequently learned that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi had communicated her position to the SPDC, at the highest level, shortly after his departure from Yangon. The representatives of the ethnic nationality political parties expressed their concern that the National Convention being proposed by the Government would be no different from the one suspended in 1996. However, they indicated to the Special Envoy their willingness, in principle, to have discussions with the Government on its road map and to find common ground to work together for its implementation, provided that certain conditions were met, including freedom of speech, freedom of publication, freedom to choose their own delegates and the ability to review the six objectives and 104 basic principles "agreed" at the previous National Convention.

6. The sense of cautious optimism that had arisen from the Special Envoy's mission in March was reinforced by several positive developments that occurred following his departure. Two additional NLD CEC members, Chairman Aung Shwe and Secretary U Lwin, were released from house arrest. The NLD headquarters in Yangon were reopened. Several meetings between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD CEC members were allowed to take place at the former's residence. At those meetings, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the CEC members reportedly discussed NLD participation in the National Convention, set to reconvene on 17 May.

7. However, that optimism dissipated on 14 May when the Government informed the CEC members that the remaining restrictions on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD would not be lifted. In its statement of 14 May, the NLD announced that it "does not believe that under these circumstances it will be able to benefit the nation by participating in the National Convention. Therefore it has been decided that the NLD will not attend the National Convention." The Secretary-General issued a statement on the same day, urging "all parties concerned, even at this late hour, to make every effort to reach an agreement, taking into account suggestions made by the NLD and by other political and ethnic nationality parties". However, the National Convention was reconvened on 17 May with the participation of the ethnic nationality ceasefire groups, but without the participation of the NLD and some other ethnic nationality political parties, including the Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD), which had won the second largest number of seats in the 1990 elections. The Secretary-General responded by voicing his concern at that development, reiterating the need for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD Vice-Chairman U Tin Oo to be released and the restrictions on the party to be lifted; and expressing his dismay that, despite assurances given by the Government, the SPDC had not taken those necessary steps.

8. In a letter that reached the Secretary-General a few days later, the Minister for Foreign Affairs explained that the National Convention was composed of all strata of Myanmar society, including representatives of political parties, national races, elected persons and representatives from different walks of life. He maintained that the Government had shown its "sincerity" by inviting the NLD to participate in the National Convention and expressed the Government's disappointment with the decision of the NLD not to take part in the Convention, which, in his view, not only forfeited the opportunity to participate and contribute to the process but also neglected its responsibility to the country. The Minister added that the Government had a responsibility to ensure the prevalence of peace and stability and economic progress and to strengthen the social fabric of the nation so that national unity was enhanced.

9. While acknowledging that the Government had made efforts to bring all parties into the National Convention, the Secretary-General replied by expressing his concern that no commitment to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi or U Tin Oo was made in the letter. He reiterated that in order for the Government's political road map to be considered a credible and all-inclusive vehicle for democratization and national reconciliation, the remaining restrictions on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo should first be lifted and the NLD offices permitted to reopen. Moreover, he stressed that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release could help to ensure the stable and orderly implementation of the road map, rather than impede its smooth progress. The Secretary-General also asked for the help of the Minister for Foreign Affairs in facilitating his Special Envoy's return to Yangon. Unfortunately, the authorities responded to that request, and to subsequent, similar requests, by saying that the set of dates proposed was "not convenient" for their national leaders, who were busy with the National Convention. Consequently, the Special Envoy has been denied an opportunity to effectively facilitate dialogue between the Government and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as the representatives of ethnic nationality groups. The response of the SPDC raises serious questions about its willingness to engage with the United Nations. It also runs contrary to the official position of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Myanmar is a member, whose foreign ministers, at their past two meetings, have publicly supported the role of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy in helping Myanmar to achieve democratization and have also collectively called for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release.

10. With regard to the modalities of the National Convention, of the 1,076 delegates who attended the opening session on 17 May, only a fraction were representatives of political parties and elected representatives, while there was a significant increase in the number of ethnic nationality delegates from the previous Convention. Delegates were reportedly instructed to adhere to the procedures of the Convention, which, among other things, included to follow instructions by the panel of chairmen for each group; to keep news about the proceedings secret until officially released; and to discuss only matters related to the topics being addressed and in line with approved advance proposal papers. It was apparently also made clear to the delegates that the proposals submitted by the delegates would have to be "in consistence with the framework of the six objectives ... and with the 104 basic principles" laid down in the 1993-1996 National Convention. In that context, delegates were said to have been informed that they would work on additional principles for the draft chapters on the legislature, executive and judiciary already laid down in the previous Convention. On 22 May, meetings of the groups began to

prepare proposals on those draft chapters. From 24 June to 9 July, in plenary sessions, delegates from each of the eight groups reportedly read out their proposals for the sharing of power in the legislative, executive and judicial sectors to be included in the new constitution.

11. While the omission of the NLD and some other political parties made it impossible to recognize the National Convention as a complete and credible forum for democratization and national reconciliation in Myanmar, the Convention process provided the ceasefire groups with a venue in which to meet and discuss issues of common concern. A joint proposal was reportedly submitted by 13 ceasefire groups, which proposed that the states and the regions be given more authority to promulgate laws in vital areas, including security and defence, aspects of foreign affairs, border trade, control of natural resources, the preservation of literature and culture and taxation. The joint proposal also suggested that states and regions should have the right to adopt their own constitutions, provided they did not contradict the Union constitution, and to legislate concerning the appointment of civil servants. However, the National Convention authorities reportedly required the ceasefire groups to amend their proposals. The National Convention was adjourned on 9 July. While no date has been indicated as to when it will reconvene, a government statement of 10 July stated that when the Convention resumed, detailed basic principles on the legislative, executive and judiciary, as well as the sharing and distribution of legislative power and the formation of a financial commission, would be laid down in accordance with the consent of the majority of the delegates.

III. Observations

12. The Secretary-General accepts that the Union of Myanmar faces complex and difficult challenges in its transition to democracy and its quest for national reconciliation. For that reason, he cautiously welcomed the announcement by the Government of its seven-stage road map, and acknowledged the potential role that a body such as the National Convention could play in the transition to democracy. However, the Secretary-General has consistently advised that for the process to be credible it has to be all-inclusive and democratic, permitting views to be expressed freely and openly from the beginning. Thus the Secretary-General believes that the National Convention, as currently configured, does not adhere to the recommendations made by successive resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her deputy, U Tin Oo, remain under house arrest. No indication has been provided as to when they will be released. The NLD has been allowed to resume some of its political activities, but other than its headquarters its offices have not been allowed to reopen. Moreover, the SPDC has not responded to efforts by the ethnic nationality ceasefire groups who are in the National Convention or by the NLD and other parties who are outside it, to discuss the pre-set and proposed constitutional principles. A large number of political prisoners also remain in detention despite consistent calls for their release.

13. It is the Secretary-General's firm and unwavering position that, unless the views of the NLD and other political parties on Myanmar's future are sought, considered and acted on, the National Convention and the road map process will be incomplete, lacking in credibility and therefore unable to gain the full support of the international community, including the countries in the region, especially ASEAN member States. At the same time, the Secretary-General believes that the recent

statements and submissions reflecting on the rights and powers to be exercised and shared at the Union and region/state level reportedly made by the ceasefire groups in the National Convention are a positive development, but it remains to be seen what would be accepted by the National Convention authorities. Against this backdrop, the Secretary-General calls on the SPDC to make full use of the National Convention's adjournment by immediately releasing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who has expressed her willingness to work with the SPDC for the good of the people, and engaging the NLD and other political parties in substantive dialogue on the next steps, with a view to moving the process of democratization and national reconciliation ahead within a specified time frame. He also urges the SPDC to conclude, in parallel, a mutually acceptable agreement with the above-mentioned ceasefire groups, believing that it would be a positive step towards resolving long-standing conflicts and could provide a basis, albeit incomplete, for national reconciliation and democratization.

14. In the belief that a solution can still be found through dialogue, the Secretary-General further urges the SPDC to allow his Special Envoy to return to Myanmar as soon as possible to continue his facilitation efforts and discuss ways to enhance Myanmar's cooperation with the good offices efforts of the United Nations. He also hopes that countries of the region, especially ASEAN member States, will take a leading role in actively counselling the SPDC to "add substance to the expression of its democratic aspiration", as recommended by the Chairman's statement at the eleventh meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, and to accelerate the process of democratization and national reconciliation, by taking the aforementioned steps.

15. Finally, the Secretary-General believes that the SPDC has an obligation to the people of Myanmar to ensure that they experience the same benefits of economic, social and political development as their counterparts elsewhere in the region. Myanmar's citizens have endured unnecessary social and economic hardship because of the absence of an all-inclusive process of democratization and national reconciliation in their country. Their predicament has been compounded by economic policies that have prevented the majority of them from improving their livelihoods. The Secretary-General is firmly of the view that Myanmar's citizens are unfortunate casualties of the prevailing situation. In that context, he wants to take the opportunity to underscore the United Nations system's parallel commitment to investing in Myanmar's long-term future, within the existing constraints, by enhancing the scale and scope of its social and humanitarian engagement with the people and communities across the country. In the event that sustainable progress towards democratization and national reconciliation occurs, the Secretary-General remains committed to taking further, appropriate steps to underpin progress, in partnership with the international community.